



# THE LIBERTY "BOYS OF '76"

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

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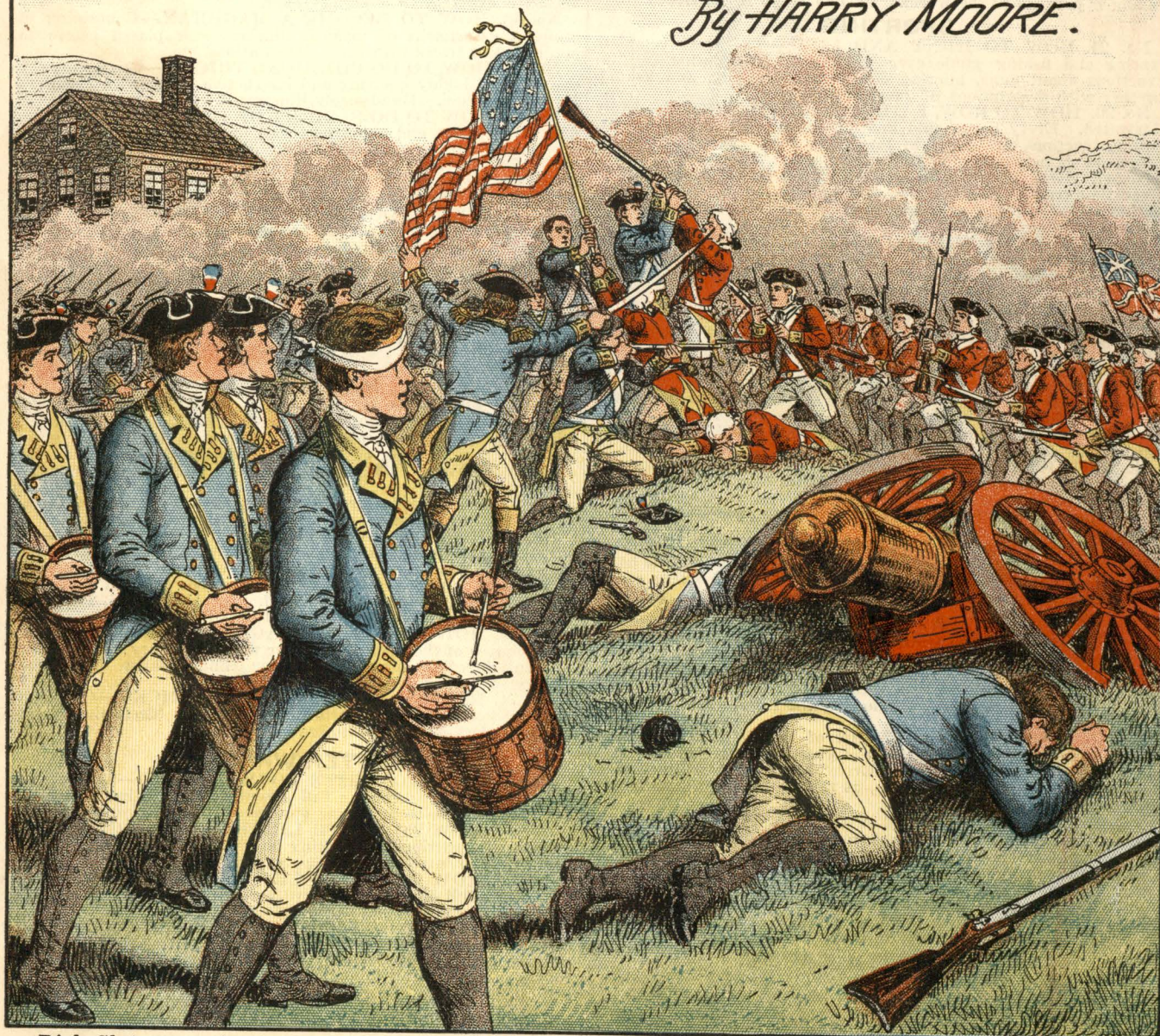
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## THE LIBERTY BOYS' DRUM CORPS; OR, FIGHTING FOR THE STARRY FLAG.

By HARRY MOORE.



Dick Slater was in the lead, and he seemed to be utterly fearless and to bear a charmed life. The drum corps was close at hand, and the music of the drums seemed to inspire the youths to deeds of reckless daring.



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## THE LIBERTY BOYS' DRUM CORPS

OR,

### Fighting for the Starry Flag.

By **HARRY MOORE.**

#### CHAPTER I.

##### BOB'S ORIGINAL IDEA.

"Say, Dick."

"What, Bob?"

"I've thought of something."

"Have you?"

"Yes."

"What have you thought of, Bob?"

"A scheme that will be a big thing for the Liberty Boys, I am sure."

"What is the scheme?"

"I'll tell you. You know that music has an enthusing effect on people, don't you?"

"Yes, so it has."

"Music sometimes makes a fellow feel as if he could do more than he otherwise could."

"I guess that is true."

"I think so; well, my plan is that we organize a drum corps."

"A drum corps!"

"Yes; don't you think it a good plan?"

"Well, I don't know but I do; but who would beat the drums? None of the boys know anything about it."

"No, but they could learn."

"So they could; but the trouble is that we have no drums."

"There are plenty down in New York City."

"True; but how can we get them?"

"Why, go down there after them, of course."

"But the British have possession of the city, Bob. Have you forgotten that?"

"No."

This conversation occurred on a beautiful morning in September of the year 1776.

The battle of Long Island, the first battle fought in the vicinity of New York, had been fought, and the patriots had retreated across to the city, only to go from there up to Harlem Heights. The British had then come over to the city and taken possession, and this was the situation on the morning of which we write.

Standing on the edge of a bluff overlooking the Hudson river, at the north edge of the patriot encampment, stood two youths eighteen years of age.

These boys were bright, handsome fellows, bronzed by out-of-door life and exposure, and withal determined and intelligent to an unusual degree.

One of them was Dick Slater, the captain of a company of young fellows of about his own age. This company—or its members, rather—was known as "The Liberty Boys of '76."

Dick was already high in favor with General Washington, on account of the fact that he had done some good work as a scout and a spy.

The other youth was Bob Estabrook. He was a life-long friend of Dick, and the two had lived within a quarter of a mile of each other since early boyhood. Their homes were up in Westchester county, near Tarrytown.

They were standing there, as we have said, talking, and Bob had suggested that a good thing to do would be to organize a drum corps among the Liberty Boys.

The trouble would be, as Dick had said, to get the drums. The British had possession of New York City, and it would be dangerous to attempt to secure drums.

Bob, however, was a youth who was always in for



anything that promised excitement or lively work. The fact that the drums were to be had only down in the city and that the British had possession, therefore, did not worry him greatly. Indeed, it made him all the more satisfied with the scheme of getting up the drum corps. The securing of the drums would be likely to furnish some of the Liberty Boys with lively work.

Dick, however, while no less brave, was more cautious and conservative. He did not believe in taking chances, while Bob seldom stopped to take the odds against him into consideration.

Still, the idea of organizing a drum corps among the Liberty Boys appealed to Dick.

He believed that it would be a good thing, if it could be put through to a successful conclusion.

He well knew that music enthused soldiers, and that they fought better when they had it to inspire them.

This was one thing in which the British had the advantage over the patriots. The regiments all had bands, and good ones, and they never had to march into action without music to cheer them and urge them on.

While the Liberty Boys could not hope to have a band, yet it would be possible for them to have a drum corps; and when it came to using the music in battle the drum corps would be as effective as a band.

After a brief period of silence, during which time Dick was thinking deeply, he said:

"So you haven't forgotten that the British have possession of the city, eh?"

"Not a bit of it, Dick."

"And you think that in spite of this fact we might be able to get some drums?"

"I think so."

"It would be dangerous."

"Yes, but there is danger in everything in these times."

"That is true; but some things are more dangerous than others."

"I know that; but what is the difference. Who cares for danger, little or big? The greater the danger the more the fun."

"I know that is the way you look at it."

"Well, so do you, you old rascal; but you aren't so ready to acknowledge it as I am."

"Well, I don't know about that, Bob. I look at it this way. That if it is necessary to go into danger I will go fearless and cheerfully; but I can't say that the greater the danger the more fun I get out of it."

"Well, it's that way with me."

They talked awhile longer, and then Bob said:

"Seriously, Dick, what do you think about the idea of organizing a drum corps?"

"I am willing, Bob. There doesn't seem to be anything to do here just at present, and we might as well be doing that as not."

"You will have to ask leave of the commander-in-chief, won't you?"

"Oh, yes."

"Well, go along and do it, then; that's a good fellow."

Bob was eager and earnest about it, and Dick could not help smiling.

"I see you have set your heart on having the drum corps, Bob," he said.

"I am free to say that I have, Dick."

"I believe you don't care so much for having the drum corps as for the fun, as you call it, that you expect to have while getting the drums."

"Maybe you are right, Dick."

"I am sure of it; well, to please you and——"

"Also to please yourself."

"Yes, to please myself as well, I will see General Washington and ask his permission to go down into the city and make the attempt to secure the drums."

"Good for you, Dick!"

"How many drums will we want?"

"Oh, we will want twenty, but I guess we will be able to get along with five or six."

"Likely we will have to do so."

"We will see about that when we go down to the city to get the drums."

They talked awhile longer, and then they went back to the quarters occupied by the Liberty Boys.

Bob remained there, but Dick went to the house occupied by General Washington, and told the orderly that he wished to see the commander-in-chief.

"Wait here in the hall a few minutes and I will see if he will see you," said the orderly.

"Very well."

The orderly was back quickly, and he said that General Washington would see the youth.

A few moments later Dick stood in the great man's presence.

He saluted and was greeted pleasantly, after which the general said:

"What can I do for you, Dick?"

"I have come to ask a favor at your hands, your excellency," was the reply.

"What is it, Dick?"

The youth told him in as few words as possible.

The great man listened intently. When Dick had finished General Washington looked thoughtfully at the floor.

He pondered for a few moments, and then said:

"I fear that there is more danger attached to this matter than you think for, Dick."

"I don't know about that, sir. There will be danger in getting the drums, but if we succeed and get them, then the drum corps will be of great help to us."

"Yes, that is true; and I approve of the idea."

"Then you will give your consent, sir?" eagerly.

"Yes; and when you are making the attempt to secure the drums that you will need I want that you shall make every possible attempt to secure information of the intentions of the British."



The youth's face brightened.

"We shall be only too glad to do that, sir," he said.

"I know that, Dick; and it may be that you will be able to do something in that line."

"I hope so, your excellency."

They talked awhile longer, and then Dick took his leave.

When he got to the Liberty Boys' quarters they looked at him eagerly and inquiringly.

"What did he say?" asked Bob, anxiously.

"He said that we could make the attempt to get the drums and organize the drum corps, Bob."

"Hurrah! That is what I wanted him to say."

"Yah, dot is vat ve haf wanted him to say, alretty," said Carl Gookenspieler, a German member of the company.

"Thot is phwat Oi have been wantin' 'im to say, be-gorra," said Patsy Brannigan, the Irish member.

The other youths all said the same. It was evident that they wanted to be doing something if it was possible.

The youths talked the matter over and decided upon their course of action.

"I think it is a good plan for only a few of us to go down to the city," said Dick; "if too many of us were to go we would be more likely to get into trouble than if only a few were to go."

"How many of us are going, Dick?" asked Bob, presently.

"Oh, about half a dozen. Six will be a sufficient number, I think."

"Who will the six be, Dick?"

"Well, I suppose that I will be one of the six."

"Of course; you are the commander and have a right to be one of the party. And I think that I ought to be a member, too, because I suggested the idea of organizing a drum corps."

"That is reasonable," said Mark Morrison; "I am willing to agree to that."

Several of the youths said the same, and this pleased Bob immensely.

When it had been decided that Bob was to be one of the number Dick suggested that the other four be chosen by lot.

This was agreed to by the rest.

A number of slips were placed in a hat, and the youths drew them out. The four who drew numbers one, two, three and four were to be the ones who were to go with Dick and Bob.

When this had been finished it was found that Mark Morrison, Sam Sanderson, Carl Gookenspieler and Patsy Brannigan had been the lucky ones.

"When will we go down to the city, and how?" asked Bob.

"I have a plan," said Dick; "it is that we go down in a boat."

The others thought this a good plan.

"Where will we find a boat?" asked Sam Sanderson.

"There is one down at the river," said Dick. "I saw it yesterday."

"Will it hold six?"

"Oh, yes, and six drums, if we succeed in getting them."

"Well, we must get the drums."

"We will try."

They talked the matter over, and it was decided that they would start down soon after dark.

The day passed slowly to those who were to make the party.

The others did not think so much about it.

Soon after nightfall the six left the encampment, went down to the river and entered the boat and started down the Hudson.

## CHAPTER II.

### GETTING THE DRUMS.

"Pull slowly, boys, and don't make any more noise than you can help."

The six Liberty Boys had reached a point opposite the north end of the city of New York, and Dick had instructed those who were rowing to pull in toward the shore.

"We will make a landing up here if possible," he said; "and then we will slip into the city from the north. I believe that will be the safest way."

The youths made no reply. It was their place to obey, and they did so. They headed the boat in toward the shore and pulled slowly and cautiously.

It took quite awhile to reach shore, but at last the boat's bow grated on the sand.

The youths stepped out, for they did not mind a little thing like getting their feet wet, and seizing hold of the boat, they pulled it up on the sand. Then they tied the painter to a bush, after which they moved cautiously up on to the level ground.

It was quite dark, and the Liberty Boys were favored in this respect. It would shield them from the sight of the British sentinels and enable them to slip past the redcoats.

They stole forward slowly and cautiously.

They intended to try to enter the city at one of the streets between Broadway and the river.

Once they were in the city they could make their way anywhere they liked.

Of course they would have to be very careful and not do anything to arouse suspicion in the minds of the redcoats they might encounter in the streets.

It was not Dick's intention that they should stay to-



gether, however. His plan was that they should separate, and each make an attempt to secure a drum.

They managed to slip by the sentinel at the end of one of the streets and entered the city, and when they had done this Dick paused at a corner and told the youths what they were to do.

He told each one what kind of a drum he was to try to secure, and instructed them to come back to that corner by half past ten o'clock, if possible.

"You must not be later than eleven o'clock," he said.

They said they would remember and that they would try to be on hand.

Then they separated, each youth going in a different direction.

Dick made his way toward Broadway.

He had some other work on hand besides that of securing a drum.

He had in mind General Washington's request that he try to secure some information while in the city, and he was going to put in a couple of hours at this.

He was soon walking along Broadway, then, as now, the greatest street in the city.

Crowds were walking along, laughing, talking and enjoying an evening's outing.

The Liberty Boy, however, was not out for pleasure. He wished to secure information that might be of value to General Washington.

He was dressed in a rough suit of clothes, such as was worn by farmers in those days; in fact each of the six Liberty Boys was dressed in this fashion.

Whenever he came to a group of redcoats, there being many such, Dick paused and listened to their conversation.

In this manner he picked up several items of information.

He learned that the British were thinking of coming up and making an attack on the patriots at Harlem Heights, but was unable to learn just when this would be done. Indeed, the soldiers themselves did not seem to know.

It was something to know that this was to be done, however; then all that was necessary was to keep a watch, and when the redcoats advanced they would be seen in time so that preparations could be made for their reception.

He was standing there listening to the talk of several redcoats, when one happened to notice him, and became suspicious.

"What do you mean by standing there listening to our conversation?" he asked, striding forward and shaking a finger at the youth.

The Liberty Boy pretended to be surprised.

"What do you mean?" he asked. "I was not listening to you."

"You lie, you young hound! You know that you were listening," said the redcoat.

Dick was not the youth to permit anyone to talk insolently to him—that is, under ordinary circumstances.

This was a different matter, however. He was in the city where the British had full sway, and would have to be very careful. So, under the circumstances, he did not feel that he was called upon to get himself into trouble by resenting the other's epithet, other than by remonstrance.

"You are mistaken, sir," he said, mildly, but decidedly. "I was not listening to you. I may have heard some of your conversation, but it was not done intentionally. I have no interest in anything you might say. I was thinking about something else."

But the soldier would not have it that way.

"I know that you are lying," he said, "and I more than half suspect that you are a rebel spy."

He did not really suspect anything of the kind, but he was naturally of a quarrelsome nature, and wanted an excuse to pick a quarrel.

"Me a rebel spy?" said Dick; "no, sir! I am a good king's man."

"Bah! You are saying that to throw me off my guard. But it won't work. I am going to give you a thrashing to teach you not to stand around and gape at your betters and listen to what they are talking about."

"That's right, Jim. Give the young cub a thrashing," said one of his comrades. There were three of them, and they had listened to the conversation with considerable interest.

"I am almost ashamed to strike such a country bumpkin," said the redcoat. "If he were only able to protect himself, enough, at least to make it interesting, then it would not be so bad."

The Liberty Boy saw that he was not going to be able to get away from there without having trouble with the quarrelsome redcoat, so he made up his mind to give the fellow a surprise.

"You need not have any fears on that score," he said, in response to the redcoat's last words. "I am able to take care of myself, and if your comrades will agree not to interfere I will give you a thrashing."

To say that the redcoats were surprised is stating the case very mildly. Dick spoke with such coolness and with such calm confidence that they did not know what to think. They decided that the youth was talking more to hear himself talk than for any other reason, however, and that he would not try to make his words good; so they laughed hoarsely and ironically, while one said, sarcastically:

"I feel sorry for you, Jim! You are going to get a good thrashing, sure."

The redcoat addressed as Jim laughed in a boisterous fashion, and said:

"One might think so, boys, to hear the cub talk; but, strange to say, I am not at all frightened."

"That is strange, sure enough," was the reply, followed by more laughter.

"I would like if you would let me go without bothering me," said Dick. "You are mistaken in thinking that I was listening to your conversation."



"Trying to crawl out of it already, eh?" said the redcoat; "well, you can't do it. You said that if my comrades would agree not to interfere you would give me a thrashing; and they agree—eh, boys?"

"Yes!" in chorus.

"That settles it, then," laughed the redcoat. "You will have to make your words good, young fellow—or try to, rather. You will not be able to make them good."

"I have no quarrel with you, and I am not going to attack you," said Dick; "but if you attack me I shall do my best to make my words good. All I ask is that I shall be permitted to go my way in peace when it is all over."

"I agree to that," said Jim. "If you can thrash me you are entitled to go your way unmolested."

Then he attacked Dick without any more words.

It was easy to see that he supposed he would have an easy time disposing of the youth.

He made the attack in careless fashion, as if he thought he would have no trouble at all in administering a thrashing to the youth.

He quickly discovered his mistake, however. Dick Slater was a wonderful fellow when it came to fighting with Nature's weapons. Few boys of his age, even in those days, when sparring was practiced by the majority of young fellows, could have held their own with him.

The redcoat was given an unwelcome surprise very quickly.

The Liberty Boy ducked, evaded, and warded off the soldier's blows for awhile, and then suddenly shot out his fist. It caught the redcoat fair between the eyes, and so great was the force of Dick's blow that his opponent was sent flying back against his comrades, and two of them went down, with Jim on top of them.

Naturally a crowd gathered as soon as it became apparent that there was to be an encounter, and now the spectators stared in open-mouthed amazement.

"Just look at that!"

"Jove, that beats anything I have ever seen!"

"Who would have thought it?"

"He knocked down three men at one blow!"

Such were a few of the exclamations given utterance to by the onlookers.

The three redcoats scrambled to their feet. They were angry and disgusted; especially was this the case with Jim, who had picked the quarrel with Dick.

He was as greatly surprised as he was angry. He had not been expecting anything of this kind. He supposed that he would treat the youth in this fashion, but instead had himself been receiver-general.

He did not as yet believe that he had met his master, however. He knew that he had been very careless, and he felt that this was what had brought about his downfall. His idea was that if he had been careful he would have easily flogged the youth.

Believing thus, he now advanced to the attack cautiously,

determined to give the youth such a thrashing as he had never had before.

The two redcoats who had gone down with Jim were angry enough to take a hand themselves, but they remembered they had promised that they would do nothing of the kind and so kept back out of the way.

They encouraged their comrade, however.

"Go for him, Jim!" said one.

"Knock his head off!" from the other.

"That is just what I am going to do," said the redcoat.

He now made the attack, and was careful not to leave himself open for another blow like the one he had received before.

The only good this did was to delay his downfall a few minutes. Dick had to work on the defensive until the other had almost tired himself out—which he did without receiving any punishment of moment—and then he took the offensive and rained blows upon the redcoat.

The fellow retreated, in a vain attempt to keep from receiving any more blows, but was unsuccessful. Dick presently landed a terrible blow on the fellow's chin, knocking him down a second time.

This time he lay still. The blow was one that was dazing in its effect.

Again the spectators uttered exclamations. They were more surprised this time, if possible, than they had been the first time.

The redcoat's three comrades were greatly surprised, also, and they were chagrined as well. They had hoped to see the youth receive the treatment he had accorded to them only a few minutes before, and their disappointment was great.

They knelt down by the side of their unconscious comrade, and began trying to bring him back to his senses.

While they were thus engaged Dick turned and started to go.

"He's going away," called out one fellow, who was undoubtedly eager to see a continuance of the hostilities.

"Hold on there!" called out one of the redcoats.

"Remember what you said," called out Dick. "You told me that if I could thrash that fellow I could go on my way unmolested."

"Yes, so we did; well, go along."

The Liberty Boy did so without more words.

He wished to get away and avoid further trouble.

He spent an hour or more on Broadway without again getting into trouble, and then went to a store and asked to see a drum.

There were some in stock that had been imported before the war began, and Dick selected one that was just what he wanted. The price was considerable, but he did not demur. He had some money, but knew of nothing that he would rather spend it for than a drum.

So he made the purchase and went out, and turned his footsteps in the direction of the corner where the four were to meet.



When he got there he found the other five youths on hand, and each and every one of them had a drum in his hands. All had been successful.

The Liberty Boy was glad of this.

"We will get out of the city at once," he said. "We have our drums. Now the next thing is to get back to Harlem Heights."

The youths set out, and by exercising great care they managed to get past a sentinel. They were not to get off scot free, however, for Carl Gookenspieler, who had the bass drum, stumbled and fell, striking the head of the drum on a stone, and making a resounding thump that could have been heard a quarter of a mile.

The sentinel heard it, and yelled out:

"Halt! Who goes there?"

"Run for it, boys!" said Dick, in a cautious voice.

The youths started to run.

Crack!

The sentinel had fired.

Carl gave utterance to a howl of pain and stumbled and fell once more.

"Oh, I am deat!" he cried: "I haf been killed, und dot is so."

### CHAPTER III.

#### PRACTICING.

Of course the others had no means of knowing whether or not Carl was severely wounded.

Knowing him as they did, however, they thought it possible that he was not injured badly.

Still he might be, and they leaped to his assistance.

They caught hold of the German youth and assisted him to his feet.

"Where are you wounded, Carl?" asked Dick.

"Oh, I don'd vos know dot. I t'ink I vos shotted der sdomach in, py shimmanetty!"

"Can you run? We must get away from here in a hurry."

"I vill mage some addempd to do dot."

"The six then set out again, and by this time a number of redcoats were coming toward them.

"We will have to run fast," said Dick.

They did run as fast as they could, but they were so loaded down with the drums that they could not make very good speed.

Carl was the slowest of all, and the others regulated their speed to suit his.

Luckily they did not have far to go to reach the boat. Had they had very far to go they would have been captured; but, as it was, they succeeded in getting away.

They reached the boat, cut the painter, tossed the drums in, leaped in, and were soon rowing out into the river at good speed.

The redcoats reached the shore when the boat was perhaps thirty yards out in the stream. It was so dark that they could not see to take aim, but they fired a volley, anyway, in the hope that they might strike some of the fugitives.

Several of the bullets did come pretty close, but, luckily, none of them hit the youths.

A few moments later and they were out of range, even had the redcoats wished to fire again.

They pulled up the stream with strong strokes. It was slow work, for they were going against the current. Nevertheless they kept at it, and at last they reached a point opposite the patriot encampment. Here they landed and disembarked.

They tied the painter to a tree, and then, lifting the drums out of the boat, made their way up the bluff to the encampment.

They went straight to their quarters and to bed.

Next morning when the other Liberty Boys learned that the six had succeeded in securing the drums they were delighted.

"Did you have any trouble?" asked one.

"Carl is the only one who had any trouble," said Bob, with a grin. "He thought that he was shot in the stomach, but was not hit at all."

"What made you think that you had been hit, Carl?" asked Sam Sanderson.

"Somet'ings dit hitted me der sdomach in," said Carl; "I don'd vos know vat id vos."

"It is likely that the rim of the drum struck you in the stomach, Carl," said Dick.

"Maype so."

"That was it, I'll wager anything," said Bob.

"That must have been it, for he is not wounded at all, and that was the only thing that could have hit him."

"Vell, id hurt me lige der deuce, und dot is so," said Carl; "I vos sure dot I had hitted ein pullet, py shimmanetty."

The youths asked for the story of the adventures of the six youths while securing the drums, and they told all about it. Carl was the only one who had any trouble, with the exception of Dick, and so it did not take long to tell it all.

Then the drums were inspected, and the youths were delighted.

They realized that they were to have a drum corps, and now the only thing that was to be decided was regarding who were to be members of the corps.

"I'll tell you what we will do," said Dick; "if there are any of you boys who feel like you want to be members of the drum corps you may do so; if none of you want to be members then I will decide the matter by drawing lots."

Four of the youths spoke up and said that they would like to be members of the drum corps. This left only two to be drawn by lot, and this was done. Dick and Bob did not draw, as they did not want to be members. Dick,



of course, could not be, as he was the captain, and Bob would not have been content to beat a drum when there was fighting to be done.

"Now, boys," said Dick, "we have the drums, and we have the members decided upon. Let us get to work and see what we can do."

"We had better go up in the woods somewhere to practice, hadn't we?" said one of the members.

"Why so, Tom?" asked Dick.

"Well, some of the boys are likely to shoot us full of holes if we make too much noise around the encampment, don't you think?"

"Oh, I guess not."

The members of the drum corps were not willing to begin practice in the camp, however, and so they took the drums and went northward up the river, to a point from where the sound of the drums would hardly reach the encampment.

All the Liberty Boys went along, as they were eager to see how their comrades would make out.

They had an expert drummer from the militia to instruct them.

When the six were ready they went to work. They did not know much about drumming, but they felt that they could learn, and they set out to do so.

They began drumming, and at first their work was not very successful. They made more noise than music.

A number of the Liberty Boys stuck their fingers in their ears and made wry faces.

"Oh, great guns! What music!" half groaned Bob.

"Yah, dot vos sount lige der deuce," said Carl Gookenspieler.

"G'wan wid yez, Cookyspieler," said Patsy Brannigan, who was always opposed to Carl on general principles; "thot is betther music dhan yez c'u'd be after makin', Oi dunno."

"Yah, und id is petter moosic as vat you gould make, Batsy Prannigan."

"Shure an' it wouldn't be much in dhe way of music av it wur not betther dhan phwat Oi kin make," grinned the Irish youth.

The youths who were doing the drumming stopped long enough to ask Dick what he thought of their work.

"I think you are doing very well, boys," he said.

"I'm glad to hear that," said Tom Wentworth, the leader of the drum corps. "I was afraid that we were so hopelessly bad in this work that we could not hope ever to make a success of it."

"Oh, you will do better after awhile, Tom."

"If they don't they will never get me to follow them into a battle," said Mark Morrison.

"Say, Dick," said Ben Spurlock; "I don't know but it would be a good plan to let them go on just as they are doing now. It would damage the enemy worse than anything we could do with bullets and swords."

"Begorra, an' that's so," said Patsy Brannigan.

"Yah, dot is der trut'," from Carl Gookenspieler.

The members of the drum corps laughed. They were willing to take things good-naturedly.

They practiced assiduously for several hours, and it was seen that they were getting better and better in the work. They kept together, and the drums harmonized better than had been the case at first. The militiaman was a good instructor.

"Oh, you will soon do good work," said he, encouragingly, when the six had finished practising. "You have done much better this time than I expected you would do."

"Is that so, really?" asked Tom Wentworth, a pleased look on his face.

"Yes."

"Well, I am glad you think so."

The youths then made their way back to the encampment.

The soldiers joked the youths as they made their way along, and asked them how they had made out in the practice. The members of the drum corps said they had made out fine, and that they would soon be in a position to lead the patriot army on to victory, in case there was another battle.

The soldiers said this would be all right.

Dick had gone to headquarters and reported to General Washington before the youths went up the river to practice, and they had scarcely more than reached their quarters before an orderly put in an appearance and told Dick that the commander-in-chief wished to see him.

Dick made his way to headquarters at once.

He was soon in General Washington's presence.

"Well, Dick," said the commander-in-chief, "I have some work for you."

"I am glad to hear it, sir. What is the work?"

"I have a message which I wish to have taken to a patriot down in the city."

"I shall be glad to take it, sir."

"Very good; when can you start?"

"At once if you like."

"Can you get into the city in the daytime, do you think?"

"I think so."

"If you fear to risk it you can put it off till night."

"Probably I could get into the city easier after night, but if it is important that the message be taken at once I will make the attempt to get there to-day."

"Well, I would like for the message to be delivered at the earliest possible moment."

"Very well; I will start at once."

General Washington gave Dick a letter, which the youth placed in his pocket. Then he described the man to whom the letter was to be delivered and told Dick where the man could be found.

"Give the letter to this man and no one else, Dick," the commander-in-chief said.

"Very well, sir."



Washington then gave Dick a few more instructions, after which the youth saluted and took his departure.

"What did he want, Dick?" asked Bob, when Dick returned to the Liberty Boys' quarters.

"I am to carry a message to a man down in the city."

"Humph! Are you going alone?"

"Yes."

"Better let me go along."

"No."

"The redcoats will gobble you up sure if you go by yourself."

"I'll risk it."

"Oh, I know you are always willing to risk anything and everything."

"Yes, when it's necessary."

"How are you going, by land or water?"

"By land; I'm going on horseback."

"How soon will you start?"

"Just as soon as I can get ready."

"You won't dare to enter the city in the daytime, will you, Dick?"

"Of course I will."

"Well, you will have to be very careful."

"I'm always careful, Bob."

Dick bridled and saddled his horse and was soon ready to go."

He gave the Liberty Boys some instructions and then mounted his horse and rode away.

He did not go very fast, for he had only a ten mile ride ahead of him.

Then, too, he had to be careful, for there was danger of encountering some redcoats.

He did not meet any of the British, however, and when he was a mile north of the Common he dismounted and tied his horse in the midst of a thicket.

"I will walk the rest of the way," he said to himself.

He was dressed in the rough clothing he had worn when he made the other trip to the city, and so did not think there was much danger of his being suspected of being a patriot.

He intended to slip past the sentinels and enter the city, if possible; but even if he were challenged he expected to be able to deceive the sentinel and be permitted to enter.

He walked along and was soon at the Common. He entered it and sauntered across it.

When he reached the head of Broadway he was challenged by a sentinel.

The youth pretended that he was a farmer boy who lived up in the region beyond the Harlem river, and was permitted to pass on.

"I guess you are not bent on doing any damage to King George's cause," the sentinel said.

"Of course not," said Dick.

Then he went on down the street, congratulating himself on having escaped so well.

## CHAPTER IV.

### DICK AND THE FRENCHMAN.

"Are you Victor Le Salle?"

"Zat eez my name."

"My name is Slater—Dick Slater."

"I eem glad to know you, Dick Slater. Vat can I do for you, my dear sair?"

"I am from the patriot encampment up on Harlem Heights."

"Oh, eez zat so? I am glad to hear zat."

"I have a letter for you, Mr. Le Salle."

"Ah, indeed. Who is ze lettair from?"

"General Washington."

"Ah, I haf been expecting a letter from ze great general."

"Here it is."

The youth drew the letter from his pocket and handed it to the Frenchman, who took the envelope, opened it, and began the perusal of the contents.

The Liberty Boy had been in the city about an hour, and had succeeded in finding the quarters occupied by the man he was to deliver the letter to. He had found the man also, and had delivered the letter, as we have seen.

The youth was silent while the other was occupied, and he busied himself with looking about him. He saw a number of things that convinced him that the Frenchman was not an ordinary man.

"I believe he is a secret representative of the French government," said Dick to himself; "and he is here to look into matters relating to the war, and to negotiate with General Washington."

When the Frenchman had finished reading the letter he folded it carefully and placed it in his pocket. Then he looked long and thoughtfully at the ceiling.

Presently he looked at Dick.

"Excuse me while I write a lettair," he said, politely; "I shall expect zat you weel ze lettair take to ze great general, when I have written eet."

"I will take it to him as quickly as possible, sir."

"Zat eez vat I know."

Then he turned to a desk and proceeded to write. He wrote rapidly, and Dick saw that he was a man who was used to doing clerical work.

When the Frenchman had finished writing he sealed the letter and handed it to Dick.

"Zare is ze lettair," he said. "Monsieur Deek Slater weel take eet to General Washington with ze compliments of Victor Le Salle."

"Very well, sir," said Dick.

He placed the letter in his pocket, and just as he did so there came a knock on the door.

The Frenchman looked startled, Dick thought.

He was silent a few moments, until there came a second knock, and then he called out:

"Who is zare?"



"Captain Mortimer of the king's army," was the reply.

Victor Le Salle looked even more frightened, and it was patent to Dick that, while the Frenchman might be a smart man and a diplomat, he was not composed of the stuff that makes soldiers.

"Vat do you want wiz me, Captain Mortimair?" he asked, his voice trembling slightly.

"I have some business of importance," was the reply. "Open the door at once."

"There are four or five men out there, Mr. Le Salle," whispered Dick.

"Ez zat a fact, Monsieur Slater?"

"Yes."

"Zen we must get out of this in a hurry; come, Monsieur Slater!"

There was another knock at this moment, followed by a command to open the door.

"Open, or we will break the door down," was the threat uttered by the captain.

But Victor Le Salle had no intention of opening the door. He was eager only that they should make their escape. There were some papers in the drawer of a desk that he wished to secure, however, and he hastily got them.

Then he led the way into an adjoining room, pausing a few moments to fasten the door behind him.

Just then he heard a crash, and knew that the redcoats had hurled themselves against the door.

They knew by the sound, however, that the door had not given way.

"Perhaps we may make our escape eef we are queek," said the Frenchman.

"Perhaps so," agreed Dick.

There was a window in this room, and Victor Le Salle opened this window. Below was the sloping roof of a building, and it would be possible to get to this roof from the window.

"You go first, Monsieur Slater; I will follow."

Just then there was another crash, and it sounded as if the door had given way.

Knowing that they had no time to lose, Dick did not stop to argue about who should go first; he climbed through the window and lowered himself to the roof. The Frenchman followed quickly, Dick assisting him in securing a footing.

"Now which way?" queried Dick.

"Through ze trap door yondair."

They made their way along the roof until they came to the trap door, and then Dick opened it.

He climbed down through, and Victor Le Salle followed as quickly as possible.

The door was closed by the Frenchman just as the faces of three or four British soldiers appeared at the window of the room they had so recently left.

"There is where they have gone!" cried the leader of the redcoats, he who had called himself Captain Mortimer. "After them, men!"

The soldiers hesitated, however. They did not have the same incentive that had urged Dick and the Frenchman on, and hesitated to take the risk of falling off the roof.

"What are you hesitating for?" the captain cried, angrily. "Zounds! Do you mean to say that you refuse to obey orders?"

"I think we would stand a better chance of heading them off than of overtaking them, captain," said one of the soldiers. "Let's go down and try to catch them as they come out."

"Perhaps that would be the better way," agreed the captain; "but one of us had better stay here, for they might come back up."

One of the redcoats remained at the window, while the others hastened downstairs and out upon the street. They hurried around to the door opening from the part of the building into which Dick and the Frenchman had disappeared.

They watched the door and also the windows quite awhile, but the two fugitives did not appear.

"Let us enter and search for them in the building," said the captain.

This plan was acted upon at once, and they entered and searched the building thoroughly without result. Dick and the Frenchman were not to be found.

Having assured themselves of this fact, the captain and his men went out and around the house and back upstairs to the rooms vacated by the Frenchman.

"We will search his room," said the officer. "The man is suspected, and there may be something here to show that he is an enemy to the king. I wish to have something to show for my trip up here."

They searched in the desk, but did not find anything that was at all suspicious. Victor Le Salle had been careful not to leave any papers that would compromise him.

When assured that there was nothing to be found that would prove anything against the man who had occupied the rooms the captain said that he would go to headquarters and report to the commander.

This was done, and when the commander learned that the occupant of the room had succeeded in making his escape he was very much disappointed.

"I am confident that man is a secret agent from France," he said to another officer who was present, "and I was in hopes that Captain Mortimer would succeed in capturing him. I have had him under espionage for some time."

"Well, perhaps you may succeed better next time," said the officer.

"I hope so."

Then he dismissed the captain, after telling him that he did not blame him for permitting the suspected man to escape.

"I know you did the best you could," he said.

Meantime what of Dick and Victor Le Salle?

They had escaped from the building before the captain and his men got downstairs and out of the main building. This was how it happened that the British soldiers



had not headed them off or found them in the building when they reached it.

They hastened away, and were out of sight before the soldiers got there.

The Frenchman led the way, for he knew the city, and Dick did not. The fact was that Victor Le Salle had another room in a different quarter of the city, and he was bound for this room.

They had managed to avoid attracting attention, and so felt safe as they walked along. There were many people on the streets, and this made the two less likely to attract attention.

They reached the room at last, and Dick entered with the Frenchman, thinking it might be a good plan to rest awhile before making the attempt to get out of the city.

He talked with Victor Le Salle and found the Frenchman to be quite entertaining.

After an hour had elapsed he said that he would be going.

He bade the Frenchman good-by and took his departure.

He had no trouble while in the city proper, but when he got up near the Common he began to look for an opportunity to slip past the sentinel and away.

In this he was unsuccessful. The sentinel was watchful, and so Dick walked boldly forward. It happened that this was a different sentinel from the one that had been on guard there when Dick had entered the city.

"Halt, young fellow," the sentry said; "who are you, and where are you going?"

"I am a farmer boy," said Dick, "and I live up on the other side of the Harlem river."

"What were you doing down here?"

"Oh, I just wanted to see the city, sir."

"Oh, that was it, eh?"

"Yes."

"And you are going home now?"

"Yes."

The sentinel hesitated. It was evident that he did not know whether to let the youth pass or not.

Finally he did make up his mind, however, and he told the youth to pass on.

The Liberty Boy did so. He was glad to get past so easily.

He made his way to the point where he had left his horse.

As he approached he heard the horse prancing about, as though uneasy.

"I wonder what is the matter with Major?" thought Dick. "He seems to be restless and uneasy."

When Dick got up close to where Major was tied he saw what the trouble was. A man was trying to get close enough to untie the halter strap.

The man was a rough looking fellow, and Dick did not doubt but what he intended to steal the animal.

"I'll put a stop to that, however," thought Dick.

Then he stepped softly forward, and laid his hand on the man's shoulder.

"Hello, what are you trying to do?" he said, quietly. The fellow uttered an exclamation and whirled around to face Dick.

"Who are you?" he cried, glaring at the youth.

"I'm the owner of the horse that you are trying to steal."

This was said coolly and calmly.

"Who says I was trying to steal the horse?" angrily.

"I do; why else would you be trying to untie the halter strap?"

"I thought the horse had no owner."

"That is a likely story."

"But it is the truth. What else could I think?"

"Lots of things. The fact that the horse is tied is proof that he has an owner. You intended to steal him."

"You lie, you young rascal!"

Out shot Dick's fist.

Crack!

It landed between the fellow's eyes, knocking him down.

He lay there a few moments and then rose to a sitting posture.

He glared up at Dick, a look of surprise on his face; there was anger and disgust there as well.

"Get up," said Dick. "Get up, and I will knock you down again."

"Then I won't get up," the fellow said.

"Very well; suit yourself," with a grim smile.

Then Dick stepped forward and untied the halter strap and led his horse away.

He glanced back, and saw that the man was just scrambling to his feet.

"I guess he won't want to try to steal the next horse he finds tied in a thicket," thought Dick.

Then he leaped into the saddle and galloped away toward the north.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE DRUM CORPS AT WORK.

"The British are advancing, sir."

"Ah, indeed?"

"Yes, sir; they act as though they intend making an attack."

It was the 16th of September.

In the room occupied by General Washington as headquarters sat the commander-in-chief and Dick Slater.

The Liberty Boy had been out on a scouting and spying expedition, and had just come back. He had gone at once to headquarters to report.

"How long will it take the British to reach the Heights, my boy?" the commander-in-chief asked, presently.

"Oh, an hour and a half, I should say, sir."

"Very good."

Then he summoned an orderly and told them to notify



the members of the staff to come to headquarters at once. The orderly bowed and withdrew.

Fifteen minutes later the officers of the staff were in the room.

General Washington told them that the British were advancing.

"They are undoubtedly going to make an attack," he said; "and I wish you would see to it that preparations are made to insure them a warm reception."

The officers said they would attend to the matter, and after listening to a few instructions from General Washington they withdrew, Dick accompanying them, for he wished to get the Liberty Boys ready for the battle.

When Dick went to the Liberty Boys' quarters and told the youths that there was to be a battle they were delighted.

"That is what I like to hear you say, Dick," said Bob.

"Yah, dot is vot ve lige to hear saided, py shimman-etty," said Carl Gookenspieler.

"Yis, ye do!" said Patsy Brannigan, sarcastically; "yez loike thot moighty well, Oi'm t'inkin'!"

"Und dot is der trut'. I do lige id shoost so vell as vat you do, und der is no misdake aboud dot."

"I don't think either one of you care much about fighting," said Ben Spurlock; "you would rather talk than fight any day."

"Oh, g'wan wid yez, Bin, me bye; yez are afther knowin' betther nor thot," said Patsy.

"Yah, you vos know petter as dot, Pen, my poy," from Carl.

"Say, this will give the drum corps a chance to see what it can do, Dick!"

The youth nodded.

"So it will, Bob," he agreed.

"And I'll wager anything that when the boys start up the music the redcoats will be knocked silly," grinned Ben Spurlock; "they will fall over and go rolling down the hill."

"I hope that it may work that way," smiled Dick.

The members of the corps laughed. They were good-natured youths, and were ready to take things pleasantly.

"We will do the best we can," said Tom Wentworth, the leader of the corps. "If our music inspires you boys to fight harder we shall be glad of it; and if, on the other hand, it is such bad music that it will knock the enemy silly, that will be a good thing also."

"You are right," agreed Dick. "Oh, I guess the music will be all right."

"I hope so."

The Liberty Boys now began making preparations for the coming battle.

All were eager for it to begin.

They had taken part in only one real battle since joining the patriot army; that was the battle of Long Island, and in this battle they had distinguished themselves greatly.

They were now eager to fight another time.

The youths were full of fight and energy, and they were

patriotic to the greatest limit; therefore they were ready to fight at any time—were eager to fight."

It did not take them long to make their arrangements.

Then they went to the point where they knew they would be stationed.

They were told just where to take their stand by the colonel of the regiment, and then they talked and waited.

"Why not do some practicing, boys?" said Ben Spurlock to the members of the drum corps.

"Yah, dot vill pe fine," said Carl Gookenspieler.

"No, don't you do it," said Bob Estabrook; "if the British heard it they would be frightened and would turn back, and we would not get a chance at them."

"That's you, Bob," said Mark Morrison; "you are always afraid that something will come up to keep us from getting into trouble."

Bob laughed.

Then they talked and joked, as though they were not expecting to become engaged in a fight that might mean the death of several of their number within the next two or three hours.

Perhaps three-quarters of an hour passed, and then the British were seen approaching.

They were beginning the ascent of the slope leading toward the Heights.

The patriots were ready for the enemy, however.

They were quietly waiting the attack.

The advantage of position was so greatly in favor of the patriots that they did not have much fear regarding the results of the expected battle.

On the enemy came.

The British advanced slowly and cautiously.

It was hard work climbing the hill, and the soldiers could not make very great speed.

Slow and sure was the motto they would have to follow.

On they came, and at last the engagement began. Some of the Liberty Boys had secured some light artillery, and they handled the cannon to good effect, while the others fought with their muskets and small arms.

The drum corps began work as soon as the battle opened, and the youths did very well, indeed.

They made very good music as the music of drums goes, and they made considerable noise as well.

The rattle of the musketry and the roar of the cannon almost drowned the sound of the drums, but the youths pounded all the harder, and managed to make themselves heard, especially in the lulls between the volleys.

The battle was not a long one, but it was warm work while it lasted.

The British found that they were getting the worst of it, and the order was given for them to retreat.

They moved back down the hill; the soldiers were willing, for they had been treated to such volleys of musketry that they were discouraged and disconcerted.

The patriot loss was sixty, while the British lost three hundred.



Thus it will be seen that the patriots came out ahead in the battle.

It was conceded by all that the drum corps did good work.

The boys had stood to the work manfully, and had pounded the heads of the drums to such an extent as to prove that the drums were made of good material.

The first thing that was done was to look after the wounded. When this had been done the dead were buried.

Then the patriot encampment resumed the aspect it had worn before the battle.

The patriots were more than satisfied with the results of the battle.

It was a victory for them; there was no doubt regarding that.

The Liberty Boys went to their quarters and discussed the battle with animation. They were more than pleased with the part they had played in it.

The members of the drum corps were complimented by their comrades.

They had really done good work, and were entitled to praise.

The youths were more than satisfied with the life they were leading as soldiers. They were young, and were eager for action.

"I wish we could have a battle every day," said Bob.

"That would be getting into action a bit more often than I would like," said Mark Morrison.

"Yah, und dot is der vay mit minesellufs," said Carl Gookenspieler.

"Oi would loike to foight dhe ridcoats ivery blissid day," said Patsy Brannigan.

"That's the way to talk, Patsy," said Bob; "you are a boy after my own heart."

"Yis, we could travel together, Oi'm t'inkin'."

Then they talked of the future and wondered when they would become engaged in another battle.

"I hope we will have time to practice up some more before there is another battle," said Tom Wentworth, the leader of the drum corps.

The others said the same.

"I think it likely that you will have plenty of time to practice up," said Dick; "the British made such a poor fist of it to-day that they will not be eager to try it again soon, I am sure."

This did not suit Bob.

"I hope they will come again with the whole army," he said.

That afternoon the members of the drum corps went up the river to the clump of timber, where they had practiced before, and they put in a couple of hours in practice with their former instructor.

"You are improving, boys," said their teacher.

Soon after they returned to the encampment an orderly came and told Dick that the commander-in-chief wished to see him at headquarters.

The Liberty Boy hastened to headquarters and was soon in the commander-in-chief's private room.

"You wished to see me, sir?" he asked, when he had saluted.

"Yes, Dick."

The commander-in-chief was silent a few moments, and then went on:

"I have some more work for you to do, and I am sure that it is work that you will like."

"I am ready to do it, sir."

"I know that, Dick; you are always ready. That is one thing I like about you."

"I hope that I shall be always ready to do my duty, sir."

"I am sure that will always be the case. Now the work that I wish you to do to-day is that of spying upon the British. I want you to learn, if possible, whether the British intend to make another attack."

"Very well, sir; I will do my best."

"It is settled, then; when will you enter upon the work?"

"Right away, if you say so."

"Well, you can do as you like about it. It is probable, however, that it will be safer for you to wait until after nightfall."

"Yes, there is no doubt about that, and as it is getting along toward evening I think I will wait."

After a little further conversation Dick took leave of the commander-in-chief and went back to the Liberty Boys' quarters.

Of course they wanted to know what the commander-in-chief wanted of Dick.

He told them, and as usual, Bob wanted to go with him.

Dick, however, said that he could better work alone, and Bob had to be satisfied to remain behind.

When supper time came the youths cooked their suppers and ate heartily.

Soon afterward it grew dark, and Dick left the encampment and moved away down the hill.

He went afoot, for it was not far to where the British were encamped.

What was bothering Dick most was to know how he was to find out the intentions of the British.

He did not see his way clear to securing the information.

He moved along until he came to the vicinity of the point where the British had been encamped, and when he got closer he discovered that the British were not there.

The army was gone.

"Well, well! This is a surprise!" he said to himself. "I don't understand it."

He moved onward toward the south.

His idea was that he would come upon the British encampment before long.

In this he was disappointed, however. He did not find the British, and at last he made up his mind that the enemy had retreated to New York.



"If that is the case they have given up the idea of making another attack," thought Dick.

He decided to keep on and enter the city, if possible, and learn something definite.

He was not more than two hours in walking down to the city, and he managed to slip in past one of the sentries without being seen.

He spent two hours in the city, and learned that there was no intention on the part of the redcoats to make another attack soon.

Having secured this information Dick stole out of the city and made his way back in the direction of Harlem Heights.

When he got there it was nearly midnight, and, knowing there was no hurry, he did not go to headquarters.

"I will make my report in the morning," he told himself.

He did this, and when General Washington learned that the British had returned to the city, and that there was to be no attack made soon again he was well pleased.

"That will give me time to think up a plan of procedure," he said aloud, but evidently not expecting Dick to say anything. Dick understood this and made no remark.

The Liberty Boys wanted to know what was on the tapis for the near future, but Dick could not tell them.

"I don't know what the commander-in-chief intends doing," he said. "He seemed pleased when he learned that the British do not intend to make an attack soon again."

"It may please him, but it don't please me," said Bob Estabrook, with a disgusted look on his face.

"You will have to be satisfied, Bob," said Dick, with a smile; "you can't expect to become engaged in a battle every day."

## CHAPTER VI.

### CAPTURED BY MARINES.

One evening two weeks later Dick Slater was down in the city on a spying expedition.

He was walking down Broadway, looking about him in a seemingly careless fashion, but he was on the alert, nevertheless.

He was dressed in an old suit of clothing such as farmer boys wore in those days, and he had on an old slouch hat and a pair of shoes that were much the worse for wear.

The Liberty Boy was going to impersonate a green country youth who had come to the city for the first time to see the sights.

It was evening, and the street lamps were lighted.

The stores on Broadway were lighted, as well.

The street was thronged with people who were promenading for pleasure, and with still others who were shopping.

It was a lively scene, and one in which Dick was pleased to mingle. He delighted in lively scenes. Life and stir was what he liked.

Still he was in the city on business, and he did not forget this fact.

He kept his mind on the work he had to do, and so, every time he came near a group of redcoats he paused and listened to their conversation.

In this way he gathered some information, but he felt that in order to secure all the information he wished he would have to overhear the conversation of some of the officers. Officers, however, were not in the habit of standing on the street and talking, and so he did not know just what to do.

He had learned where headquarters was, and presently he made his way in that direction.

He paused when he arrived near the building in which General Howe and his staff officers had their headquarters and took a survey of the building.

He wished to enter the house and spy on the officers, but realized that it would be difficult and dangerous to do so.

However, Dick Slater was a hard youth to discourage.

One thing he knew, and that was that he would not dare enter by way of the front entrance; indeed, it would be impossible for him to do so.

The only thing to do, therefore, was to try to enter by the rear.

He made his way around to the back and took a survey of the building from this point.

There was a door and two windows, and lights shone through the windows. Dick could see dark figures moving back and forth in the building, and he knew that the servants were at work.

"I will have to wait awhile," he told himself; "it would not be safe for me to try to enter while those people are up and stirring."

He would have remained there until things got settled for the night, but suddenly he heard voices and footsteps, and he made up his mind that he had better go away from there, for the present, at least.

He could return later on.

He moved away, but had gone only a short distance when he heard a voice cry out:

"Hold on, there!"

The Liberty Boy glanced back and could see several forms, but only dimly.

He knew that the men, whoever they were, would not be friends of his, however, and so he started on a run.

The men started in pursuit at once.

"Stop! Hold on!" cried one of the men. "We want to talk to you."

But Dick did not want to talk to them, and so he did not stop.

He ran as fast as he could.

After him came the redcoats—for such they were—at the top of their speed.



The Liberty Boy did not go toward Broadway. It was too light up that way to suit him.

Instead he ran toward the East River, it being dark down in that direction.

His pursuers were good runners, however, and they kept close enough so that they could see him, thus making it impossible for him to shake them off.

He kept on running until he arrived at an East River dock, and then he turned to the right and ran on.

He continued in this direction, following the bend of the river until he came to Bowling Green.

There were lights here and there in the little park, and Dick did not wish to risk entering Bowling Green, so he continued onward.

As bad luck would have it, he ran plump into a party of British marines who were about to embark in a boat to return to their ship, which lay out in the bay.

These marines had been drinking, and were just in the mood to take advantage of any happening and turn it to their own advantage.

They saw Dick as he came running up, and without stopping to ask any questions they grabbed him, and held him, in spite of his struggles.

"Into the boat with the lubber," said one; "we'll take him aboard ship and have some sport with him."

"Yes, yes!" was the cry.

Just then the redcoats who had been chasing Dick came running up, and they demanded that the youth be turned over to them.

"He is a rebel spy, and we were chasing him," said the leader of the party.

"Well, we caught him," said one of the marines; "and we are going to keep him."

"Why do you wish to do that? What can you do with him on board your ship?"

"We can take care of him there as well as you can take care of him on land."

"But General Howe will want to interview the prisoner."

"So will Admiral Howe; and as he is our commander we will have to take the prisoner to him."

This made the redcoats angry, and they protested, but the marines only laughed at them.

"We've got the prisoner and we're going to keep him," the lieutenant said.

"If you do we will go straight to General Howe and report your action," said the leader of the party that had been chasing Dick; "and he will send a messenger to his brother, the admiral, stating the case, and the result will be that you men will be reprimanded."

"Oh, you'll do that, will you?" exclaimed the lieutenant of the marines.

"Yes."

"Let's give them a beating, fellows!" said one of the marines.

"Yes, yes!" was the cry.

This was all that was needed. The marines were just ripe for something of the kind, and so, while four held

Dick, the others attacked the soldiers, and quite a combat ensued.

The soldiers fought with vigor and energy, but they were outnumbered and soon had enough to succumb.

While the combat was going on Dick made a sudden, fierce attempt to break away from the marines who were holding him.

He was unsuccessful, however. Four against one was too great odds for him, and he could not overcome their strength.

"Stop struggling," said one. "You can't get away."

"I guess you are right," agreed Dick.

"Of course I am."

"But you are making a mistake in holding me here."

"Why so?"

"Because I am not a rebel at all."

"Of course you would say so."

"It is true."

"You will have to prove that to the admiral."

"Then you really intend to take me aboard your ship?"

"Yes."

By this time the marines had given the finishing touches to the soldiers, and the latter were glad to get away without insisting any further that the prisoner should accompany them.

The marines were jubilant.

They had given the soldiers a thrashing, and this was pleasing to them, as there was more or less jealousy between the marines and the soldiers.

"Into the boat with him, boys," said the lieutenant of the marines; "we will take him aboard the ship."

They forced Dick to enter the boat, and then they embarked and took their seats.

Those who were to row took up the oars and began work. Soon the boat was moving out into the bay, and twenty minutes later it came to a stop alongside a war-ship.

The sentry on the deck hailed the boat, and the lieutenant of the marines answered and asked that the rope ladder be lowered.

This was done, and the marines began climbing up, one after another.

They forced Dick to climb the ladder, and when they were all on deck and the boat had been drawn up to the davits they conducted the Liberty Boy to the cabin and locked him in one of the rooms.

Then the lieutenant went to the captain's cabin and made his report.

"So you have a prisoner, eh?" the captain said; "bring him here. I wish to have a talk with him."

The lieutenant went out, and presently returned accompanied by two marines, who led Dick between them.

The captain looked at Dick with interest.

"Well, young man, who are you?" the captain asked.

"My name is Ben Ross, sir," Dick replied.

"Where do you live?"

"Up in Westchester county."



"Where is that?"

"About ten miles north of New York City."

"What were you doing down in the city?"

"I came down to see the sights, sir. I had never been in the city, and father told me I could come."

"You are a rebel, are you not?" the captain asked.

"No, sir," denied Dick.

"Of course you would say so, but it is my belief that you are a rebel. It is a suspicious circumstance that you should come into the city at this time, when it is in possession of the British."

"That was one reason why I wanted to come at this time, sir; I wanted to see the British soldiers."

The captain asked Dick a number of questions, and then told the marines to take him back to the room and lock him in.

The marines conducted Dick back to the room and locked him in.

When he had been left to himself thus Dick fell to pondering over the situation.

He did not like the way things looked at all.

"I must try to escape," he told himself.

But this would be difficult.

Still, he did not as yet deem it impossible of accomplishment.

He was free to move around in the room, but it was so small that it did not give him much chance for exercise.

He tried the door and found it locked. There was no window.

There was a candle burning in the room, so Dick could see what he was about.

It did not take him long to discover that it would be impossible for him to get out of the room.

"I guess I will have to stay here and take things as they come," he told himself.

He decided to make the best of the matter, so lay down in the little bunk at one side and was soon asleep.

He had no idea how long he had slept when he was awakened by the grating of a key in the lock.

He opened his eyes and looked toward the door.

It opened slowly, and a marine stuck his head in through the opening.

When he saw Dick was awake he entered, but in such a stealthy manner that the youth was surprised. He could not think why the marine should act thus.

The man stepped cautiously over to the side of the bunk, and bending down, whispered:

"Would you like to get away from here?"

He answered promptly:

"Yes, I would like to get away from here."

"So I thought; well, I am here to give you the chance."

"Is that so?" eagerly.

Of course both talked in whispers.

"Yes."

"But I don't understand. Why should you want to help me get away from here?"

"It is very simple. I want to get away myself, and so I am willing to give you the chance to go."

"You mean that you want to leave the ship for good and all?"

"Yes."

"You mean that you will desert."

"That is what I mean."

"Why do you wish to do that?"

"I am tired of life. I don't like the sea and want to get back to solid land again."

"I understand."

"And if I were to desert in England I would be captured again, and that would be the end of me. If I desert here and succeed in getting up into the country a ways I may escape being captured."

"I see; and you wish me to go with you and find a safe place?"

"That is it exactly. You help me and I will help you."

"That suits me exactly. I am eager to get away from here, and I will do all I can to aid you in reaching a haven of refuge."

"Good! Come along with me, then."

"How are we going to get off the ship without being seen?"

"Trust that to me; you follow me and be as careful as you can, and we will get off the ship without being discovered."

"All right; lead the way."

The marine, after a cautious glance out to see if the coast was clear, turned and motioned to Dick.

The youth rose, donned his hat, and stepped to the doorway and out of the room, following close at the marine's heels.

The man led the way out of the cabin, and it was such a dark night that they would be easily able to avoid being seen, unless they got close to the sentinel on the deck.

The marine knew right where the sentinel was stationed, however, and avoided him.

He led the way toward the stern, and when they reached the rail the marine whispered:

"There is a rope here; we will slide down it, and at the bottom is a boat. We will get into the boat and row up the river. You will know where to make a landing."

"True," said Dick.

The marine climbed softly over the rail and slid down the rope, and Dick followed.

They were soon seated in the boat, and the marine, af-

## CHAPTER VII.

### A NEW RECRUIT.

The Liberty Boy was surprised.

He had not been expecting anything of the kind.



ter cutting the painter, took up the oars and rowed slowly and cautiously away.

He did not want the sentinels on the ship's deck to hear him.

One of the oars struck against something floating in the water, however, and this made a noise that was heard by the port guard.

He at once challenged:

"Ahoy there! Who comes?"

Of course the marine did not make any reply. He simply bent to the oars and rowed as hard as he could.

The sentinel, not receiving any reply, challenged again.

Still he received no reply, and he decided that what he had heard was nothing of importance.

"A floating log struck against the ship's side, likely," he said to himself.

This enabled Dick and the marine to get away without further trouble.

They would have to exercise care, however, as they would have to pass near other warships, and might be heard and pursued.

The marine knew about where the other vessels were anchored, and so was able to avoid nearing them.

When all the warships had been passed the marine headed the boat up the river.

They felt fairly safe now. They did not believe there was much danger of their being discovered.

It was hard work pulling up the stream against the current, and they took turns about, Dick being an expert with the oars.

At last they arrived at a point outside the Heights, and Dick, who was rowing, headed in toward the shore.

"Are you going to make a landing?" the marine asked.

"Yes; I think this will be a good place to land. We will be safe here, for the patriot encampment is up there on top of the hill."

"But I don't know that I want to enter the patriot encampment."

"Why not? It is the safest place in the world for you, now that you have deserted from the warship."

"Say, I believe the captain was right in thinking you were a rebel," said the marine.

"Yes, he was right. That is to say, I am a patriot."

"And are you a member of the patriot army?"

"Yes."

"Then you really were spying down in the city?"

"Yes."

"Are you an officer in the patriot army, or simply a scout and spy?"

"I hold the rank of captain."

"Ah, indeed!"

"Yes; I am the captain of a company of young fellows like myself. We are known as the Liberty Boys of '76."

"Ah, I have heard of you."

At this moment the bow of the boat bumped against the bank and the conversation ceased.

They got up and stepped ashore.

They tied the painter to some bushes, and then Dick led the way up the hill.

When they were nearly to the top of the hill they were challenged by a sentinel.

"Halt! Who comes there?"

"Friends," replied Dick.

"Advance, friends, and give the countersign."

The Liberty Boy knew the countersign, and he advanced and gave it, whereupon the sentinel said:

"Pass on."

The two did so.

Of course Dick, being familiar with the ground, led the way.

They were soon at the quarters occupied by the Liberty Boys.

It was now pretty well along in the night, and the youths were all sound asleep.

"We may as well lie down and sleep till morning," said Dick. "You are welcome here, and you are safe."

The two rolled themselves up in blankets and lay down.

They were soon sound asleep.

They were up bright and early next morning, and Dick introduced his companion of the night before to the Liberty Boys.

The British marine said that his name was George Welburn.

Dick explained how he had come to make the acquaintance of Welburn, and the youths listened to the story with interest.

"Say, you have done the right thing, Mr. Welburn," said Bob Estabrook, "and now if you will just join the Liberty Boys' company you will be all right."

"Yah, dot is so," said Carl Gookenspieler; "you vill mage ein goot patriot."

"That's roight," said Patsy Brannigan. "Shure, an' yez'll be afther doin' dhe roight t'ing av yez turn in an' foight fur freedom instid uv fur King George."

"Perhaps he may not care to join us," said Dick; "and in case you don't, Mr. Welburn, you will be all right. You have done your part in enabling me to escape from the warship, and you are free to go your way in peace."

George Welburn looked thoughtful.

It was evident that he was thinking some of joining the Liberty Boys.

"Now that I have deserted from the service of King George I will never dare return to England," he said; "that being the case, it will be necessary for me to remain in this country and become an American citizen. Looking at it that way, it will be no more than right that I should help fight for the independence of the American people. I believe that I will join your company, Mr. Slater—that is, if you will accept my services."

"I shall be very glad to have you do so," said Dick.

"It is settled, then; from this moment I am a Liberty Boy."

"Now that you have decided to become one of us," said Dick, "it will not be out of place for me to ask you



to go with me to headquarters. You may be able to give General Washington some information of value."

"I don't know about that, Captain Slater," the ex-marine said; "I can say, however, that any information I have is at his disposal."

"Well, come along to headquarters with me. The commander-in-chief will be glad to ask you some questions."

"Very well; lead the way, and I will be right along with you."

They set out at once.

It was about a quarter of a mile to the house in which General Washington had taken up his quarters, and they were soon there.

The orderly knew Dick, and evidently had orders to admit him as soon as he came, for he did so, and conducted the two to the commander-in-chief's room.

When Dick had saluted he introduced his companion.

General Washington was evidently greatly interested in the ex-marine, and Dick saw that the great man was pleased.

"You have done well, if your visit to the city was the cause of this accession to the ranks, Dick, my boy," he said.

"Well, I think that it was the cause of it, sir," replied Dick.

"Yes; but for Captain Slater's being captured and brought aboard my ship I might never have thought of deserting," said George Welburn.

They talked of this matter a few minutes, and then Dick made his report.

When he had finished the commander-in-chief asked a number of questions of George Welburn.

The ex-marine answered the questions promptly, and in such manner as pleased the commander-in-chief.

He gave General Washington some information that was of value to him.

At last the two saluted and withdrew.

They went back to their quarters, and George Welburn began making the acquaintance of the Liberty Boys.

He was a young man, not to exceed twenty-four years, and he was a pleasant-mannered fellow, and so the youths took a liking to him at once.

"I believe that I am going to like my new friends and new quarters very much, Captain Slater," he said to Dick, later on.

"I am glad of that, George," said Dick. Then he went on: "We call one another by our first names, always, and I want that you shall call me Dick, and not Captain Slater."

"All right, Dick. I want to do as the rest of you do."

A little later the members of the drum corps got their drums out and started away to practice.

"What have you there?" asked George Welburn.

"A drum corps," replied Dick.

"Well, that is good; do they do good work?"

"They are becoming tolerably proficient," said Dick.

"They can pound those drums to beat anything you ever saw," said Bob Estabrook.

"You mean to beat anything you ever heard," grinned Ben Spurlock.

"Yah, dot is it," said Carl Gookenspieler; "you gannod see dose moosics vat der trum gorps mage, but you gan hear id, un dot is der trut'."

"Yes hav' tould dhe thruth fur wanst in yer loife, Cookyspieler," said Patsy Brannigan.

"Yah, und I haf dold me dose trut's more dimes as vat you haf, Batsy Prannigan," retorted Carl.

"Oh, g'wan wid yez; yez niver till dhe thruth, ixcept by misthake, begorra; an' yez are alwuz sorry thot yez made dhe misthake."

The new recruit was amused by the talk of the two youths, and he laughed and remarked to Dick that Patsy and Carl must surely afford a lot of entertainment for the Liberty Boys.

"Yes, indeed," said Dick, "and the best part of it is that, although they quarrel at a great rate, and often come almost to blows, yet they are in reality the best friends in the world, and will fight for each other to the death, if need be."

"That is good."

"Yes, indeed."

The drum corps went to the practicing ground and put in a couple of hours of solid work, and then came back.

"You are doing fine, boys," said Dick. "You will furnish us some good music to fight by in the next battle."

"We will try our best to do so," replied Tom Wentworth.

## CHAPTER VIII.

MARY DENNISON.

"Ah, Dick, you are back from the city, I see."

"Yes, your excellency."

"What did you learn?"

"I learned that the British are getting ready to make a move, sir."

"At last, eh?"

"Yes."

"What do they intend to do, my boy?"

"They intend to go up the East River in the warships, sir; they will land a large force at Throg's Neck and come in behind us and cut us off from retreating inland."

General Washington looked at Dick Slater with some surprise, and no small degree of interest.

"And so that is their plan, eh?" he remarked, presently.

"Yes, sir."

Two weeks had elapsed.

The British remained quietly in New York, doing nothing, and the patriots had remained quietly in camp on Harlem Heights, waiting for the British to make some move.



Dick Slater had been down in the city on a spying expedition and had just returned, and was at headquarters making his report to the commander-in-chief.

He had learned that the British were to make a decided move, and had hastened back to inform General Washington of the fact.

The commander-in-chief pondered a few moments and then asked Dick a number of questions.

When was this move to be made?

How strong a force was to be taken up and landed at Throg's neck?

These and other questions were asked.

They were answered promptly by Dick, and when at last the commander-in-chief got through, he had a good knowledge of the intentions of the British.

He at once summoned the officers of his staff, and a council of war was held.

It did not take long to decide upon a course of action.

"It is easy to see what we must do," said General Washington. "We must retreat back into the country, or we will be hemmed in here and captured."

"Yes," agreed General Greene, "that is undoubtedly our best move."

It was decided to send a force around by land to meet the British when they attempted to land at Throg's Neck; and while this force was holding the redcoats in check the main patriot army could be retreating up into Westchester county.

As soon as the Liberty Boys learned that there was to be a move of this kind made they were eager to take part in it. There was a good chance to get into a fight with the British at Throg's Neck, and they wanted to be there.

When Dick told them that he had asked the commander-in-chief to let the Liberty Boys go with the force that was to go to Throg's Neck they were delighted.

They began making preparations for the trip at once.

The drum corps was glad to get the chance to go where they might be of service, and they were soon ready.

It was on the morning of the 12th of October that the force moved toward Throg's Neck.

The force arrived there before noon, and the first thing that was done was to destroy a bridge that crossed a narrow creek.

This would make it a difficult matter for the British to get across. They would have to wade, and would come very near miring in the mud.

The British landed from the warships shortly after noon, and began figuring on getting across to the mainland.

This would be a difficult thing to do, but they were not to be daunted, and presently they moved forward and began wading across the creek.

The water was not deep, but the mud was sticky, and it was slow and difficult work making their way along.

Then, presently the patriots opened fire.

The redcoats returned the fire as best they could, but they were laboring under difficulties and could not do effective work.

The patriots had the better of the affair, as was to be expected, for they were sheltered by trees and bushes on the mainland, while the British were out in the open, where they presented a fair mark for the patriots' bullets.

The British kept on coming, slowly, but surely, and the patriots kept firing, with the result that quite a number of the redcoats fell dead or wounded. And some who were only wounded drowned before they could be gotten out of the water.

The patriots made it so hot for the redcoats that they were forced to retreat back to the point where they had landed.

The first attempt to get across had failed, but the redcoats were not ready to give it up.

They had a much stronger force than the patriots had, and were confident that they could succeed in getting across sooner or later.

On the next day they again made the attempt, and again they were repulsed.

The drum corps did some work on each day, but its services were not needed so much as when a hand-to-hand conflict was indulged in.

So far the patriots had not suffered any to speak of, and the Liberty Boys were well satisfied.

They discussed the matter that evening while eating supper.

"We have given the redcoats the worst of it so far," said Bob Estabrook.

"Yes, so we have," from Mark Morrison.

"Yah, ve haf whipped der Pritich efery time," said Carl Gookenspieler.

"Yis, an' we wull kape on doin' ave it," said Patsy Brannigan.

"If you two fellows don't get killed we will certainly be able to whip the British every time," said Ben Spurlock, with a grin.

"Vell, maype der is more druth dan boetry aboud dot," said Carl.

"Shure, an' yez are afther bein' roight abhout thot, Cookyspieler," grinned Patsy; "we are both foighters, so we are."

"Especially minesellufs."

"Yis, yez are a foighter, Oi am not afther t'inkin'," said Patsy; "it is mesilf is a foighter fur dhe two av us, an Oi giv' yez ha'f dhe chredit, Cookyspieler."

"I don'd vos vant any gredit; I vos peen ein fighder minesellufs, und eferybody knows dot."

"Yis, dhey do!" with infinite scorn in his tones.

"Stop quarreling, you fellows," said Ben Spurlock; "you would be all right if you didn't do so much of that."

"Ve are all righd, anyhow, Pen, my poy," said Carl.

"Yis, ye hav' tould dhe thrut wanst, Cookyspieler," said Patsy.

Next day the redcoats made another attempt to get across the muddy creek, but as on the two former instances, they were driven back after they had lost a number of their men.



Every day for the next three days the redcoats made an attempt to get across the creek, and on the last day they were successful.

The patriots made a brave stand, and the Liberty Boys were in the thick of the fight.

The redcoats were determined, however. They had been held in check so long that they were angry, and they would not give up.

The patriots held out quite awhile, and then the order was given to retreat.

This was done, and they felt that they had done enough for the upholding of the starry flag, under which they had fought all the time.

They had held the enemy in check six days, and this had given the patriot army plenty of time to retreat in safety.

They had gone to White Plains and had taken up quarters there.

The force that had been holding the British in check at Throg's Neck now retreated toward White Plains.

They marched steadily, and arrived at the encampment the next day at noon.

The British, when they learned that the patriot army had escaped, were greatly disappointed, and they returned to New York City to think the matter over and come to some decision regarding their future movements.

They went into the affair deeply in a council and talked it over at length.

Scouts were sent to the vicinity of White Plains to look the situation over and bring some information regarding the strength of the patriot army and position.

These scouts, when they returned, reported that the patriots occupied a very strong position.

General Howe and the members of his staff now held another council of war.

It was decided finally that an advance should be made.

"We will go slowly, however, and take our time," said the British general; "and perhaps we may be able to dislodge the enemy. Indeed, we may be able to capture a goodly number of the rebels."

Meanwhile the patriots were waiting and watching.

General Washington made continual use of Dick Slater, as he was the most expert scout and spy in the patriot army.

Others acted as scouts and spies also, but they did not do as good work as was the case with Dick.

On the afternoon of the 25th of October Dick was riding along a winding road which led through the timber a few miles south from White Plains.

Suddenly he found himself confronted by a girl of seventeen years. She was dressed in the kind of clothing worn by women and girls of that time and region.

"Stop!" she said, waving him back.

The Liberty Boy brought his horse to a stop.

"What is it, miss?" he asked, doffing his hat and bowing.

"You are in danger, sir, if you go on in the direction

you are going," was the reply; "that is, if you are a patriot."

"I am a patriot, miss; but of what does the danger consist?"

"There is a force of British dragoons camped down the road a little ways from here."

"Ah, indeed? And if I had kept on I would have run right upon them."

"Yes, so you would."

"How far from here is the party you speak of?"

"About one-third of a mile."

Dick looked undecided.

"I want to go on farther south," he said, "and I hardly know how I am to get around this party."

"I can show you a way to do so, sir."

"Very well, and thank you."

"You will have to dismount and lead your horse."

The Liberty Boy leaped to the ground.

"Lead on, miss, and I will follow," he said.

The girl did so, leading the way through the timber; presently they came to a log house standing in a little clearing of two acres in extent.

"This is my home," said the girl; "I live here with my mother."

"Have you no father?"

"He is dead."

Then Dick asked the girl what her name was.

"Mary Dennison," was the reply.

Then she asked him what his name was, and he told her.

Her face lighted up when he told her his name was Dick Slater.

"I have heard of you," she said.

"Indeed?" remarked Dick.

"Yes, a young man who lives not far from here told me about you and your Liberty Boys. He wants to join your company."

"What is his name?"

"Frank Martin."

"Well, I shall be glad to have him join my company. All he will have to do will be to go to the encampment at White Plains."

"I don't want him to join the army; but he wants to do so."

The Liberty Boy smiled.

"Then you are interested in him, Miss Mary?" he remarked.

The girl blushed and looked somewhat confused, and then she said:

"We are like brother and sister, Mr. Slater. We have lived near each other all our lives, and have gone to school together and played together; and then, since father died, we have felt better and safer by having Frank around."

"I understand; but Frank's father will be at home, will he not, and he will be protection enough."

"No, his father is dead, also."

"Oh, that is the trouble, eh?"



"Yes. We will be left without any man to appeal to for protection in case of need if Frank goes to the war."

"Well, I won't do anything to get him to join the army, then. I will not persuade him to do so, but will try to dissuade him, if you like. You have done me a favor in warning me of the presence of the British troopers, and I wish to repay you in some manner."

"Oh, that is all right, Mr. Slater; I am not afraid but what we will get along all right with Frank away. I now think that if he wishes to join let him do so."

"Very well; just as you say."

The girl uttered a glad exclamation at this instant.

"There comes Frank now!" she said.

Sure enough, a young man was coming across the clearing toward them. He was a good looking young fellow, frank-faced and honest in appearance.

He looked at Dick with interest and a show of curiosity, and when the girl introduced Dick the young man was plainly delighted.

Mary Dennison explained Dick's presence, and then said:

"You can guide Mr. Slater around and into the road south of where the British troopers are encamped, Frank."

"All right, Mary; and," with a smile, "I will ask him about letting me join the Liberty Boys while I am at it."

"All right, Frank; do as you like about it."

He looked surprised.

"Do you mean it, Mary?" he asked.

"Yes; of course I would be better satisfied if you did not join the army, but if you feel that it is your duty to do so, why go ahead and do it."

Then he turned to Dick, and said:

"I will guide you to the road now, Mr. Slater, if you are ready to go."

"I am ready," was the reply.

Then Dick bade Mary Dennison good-by and followed Frank Martin.

He at once asked Dick if he might join the Liberty Boys' company, and Dick told him that he might.

"You will find it hard and dangerous work, however," he told the youth; "there is nothing easy or pleasant about soldiering."

"I didn't suppose there was, Mr. Slater; I feel that I ought to help fight for the freedom and independence of the American people, however, and I want to join."

"Very well; report at the patriot encampment at White Plains when you get ready, and I will make you a member of my company."

"Thank you; I will be there soon."

A few minutes later they reached the road, and after bidding each other good-by Frank turned back, while Dick led his horse into the road and leaped into the saddle.

Just as he did so he heard the clatter of horses' hoofs behind him, followed by a shout.

The Liberty Boy looked around and saw a dozen British troopers coming at a gallop.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE DRUM CORPS AGAIN AT WORK

That these were the troopers that had been encamped up the road, and whom he had come around through the timber to avoid, Dick did not have the least doubt.

They had evidently broken camp and had mounted and started to return to the main encampment of the British army.

Instantly Dick spoke to his horse, and the noble animal responded promptly.

Forward he leaped, almost with full speed at the first jump, and when the troopers saw this they set up a shout, and the leader commanded the fugitive to stop.

Of course this did no good, however. Dick had no intention of stopping.

Neither did he urge his horse more than he had already done.

He did not believe it would be necessary, for Major was a splendid animal, possessed of wonderful speed and staying qualities.

"They can't catch me," said Dick to himself.

In thinking thus he was evidently right, for his horse began drawing away from those of the pursuing troopers.

The redcoats saw this and gave utterance to yells of anger.

They kept up the pursuit, somewhat to Dick's surprise, and he made up his mind that the main army must be somewhere ahead, and that the troopers expected to keep him going until he reached the army, when he would be captured.

The Liberty Boy wondered how far it was to the British encampment. If it was far enough so that there would be a crossroad that he could turn into he would be all right; but if not, then there would be difficulty in making his escape.

On they went, the pursuers urging their horses to their best speed, and Dick kept his horse going well also.

Presently he came to a hill, and caught sight of the British encampment.

It was only half a mile or so ahead.

There seemed to be no crossroad to get away on, and Dick hardly knew what to do.

He looked back, and noted that his pursuers were more than a quarter of a mile behind.

"I think that I will have time to get away in the timber," he told himself. "I'll try it, at any rate."

He dismounted, after bringing his horse to a stop, and led Major into the timber.

He moved along as rapidly as possible, and felt pretty confident that he could get away from the pursuing redcoats, in case they tried to follow him.

They did follow. When they came to the point where Dick had dismounted they dismounted also, and then they hastened into the timber in pursuit.



They did not take their horses, however, leaving them in charge of one of their number.

This gave them an advantage over Dick, for they could get along faster without having to be bothered with horses than he could with his horse.

Still, he made very good speed, and a little later he came to an old, unused road. He would be able to ride here, and so, leaping into the saddle, he urged his horse to a gallop.

The British came to the old road and, realizing that they could not overtake the fugitive, they gave up the chase, and made their way back to where they had left their horses.

The Liberty Boy made his way back along the road, and found that it struck the main road at a point not far from the home of Mary Dennison.

He did not care to go to the girl's house, however, as he had no business there, so he kept straight on up the road in the direction of White Plains.

He had learned where the British encampment was, and this was all he had set out to discover.

He had reached the patriot encampment an hour and a half later, and when he had attended to his horse he went to headquarters and made his report to the commander-in-chief.

General Washington was glad to know just where the British army was located.

• He knew just about when to look for the enemy by knowing how far away it was.

He asked Dick a number of questions, which the youth answered promptly and clearly.

Then Dick went to the Liberty Boys' quarters, and found the youths taking things easy.

They inquired regarding how he had made out in his scouting expedition.

• He told them, and he told also about Frank Martin, who wanted to become a member of the Liberty Boys company.

"That will be all right," said Bob; "we are always glad to take in new members."

"Yes," said Dick; "and he seems to be a fine fellow." Next morning Frank Martin put in an appearance.

• He was given a hearty welcome by Dick.

"Do you wish to join the company now?" asked Dick.

"Yes," was the reply. "That is what I am here for."

"Very well; you may consider yourself a member. Come, I will introduce you to the other boys."

Frank went with Dick and was introduced to the Liberty Boys, who greeted him in a cordial manner.

"I hope you will like soldiering, Frank," said Bob Estabrook.

"Oh, I think I will," was the reply.

"There is more work and hard knocks about it than anything else."

"I won't mind that; I have been used to hard work all my life, and I won't mind a few hard knocks."

The Liberty Boys wanted to know when the British

would attack the patriot army, but Dick could not tell them.

"We will simply have to wait and see what the enemy does," he said. "The redcoats may make an attack in a day or two, and they may not."

General Washington sent Dick out on a spying expedition that day, and the youth found that the British had marched forward toward White Plains several miles.

He returned to the patriot encampment and made his report.

General Washington was thoughtful for awhile, and then said:

"If they keep on advancing at the same rate they will get here about the 28th—the day after to-morrow."

"That is what I should judge, sir," agreed Dick.

On the next day he went out again, and found the enemy much nearer to White Plains.

"I guess the general was right," he told himself; "the British will appear before our encampment some time to-morrow—possibly in the morning."

He returned and made his report.

The commander-in-chief thought that the enemy would appear and make an attack on the morrow.

He at once called a council of war.

When the members of the staff had appeared at headquarters he laid the matter before them.

"I think that we are to be attacked," he said; "and the thing for us to do is to get ready to repulse the enemy."

The others thought the same, and the only thing to do was to arrange the details.

This they proceeded to do.

Each officer was given a certain portion of the work to do, and when it had all been planned out the council broke up.

The officers went back to their respective quarters and began the work of getting ready for the expected battle.

The Liberty Boys were well pleased. The idea of engaging in a battle was pleasing to them.

They would rather fight than eat any time.

Especially was this the case with Bob Estabrook and Patsy Brannigan. The Irish youth, of course, was a natural fighter; it was in the blood, and Bob Estabrook happened to be endowed with the same kind of temperament.

None of the others were far behind these two in that respect, however; all delighted in engaging in battles with the British.

The drum corps began making preparations to get in its work.

The youths tightened up the drumheads and otherwise got ready for the fray.

Sure enough, the next morning the British appeared before the patriot encampment on Chatterton Hill.

They did not hesitate long, but advanced to the attack. Soon the battle was raging.



The Liberty Boys went into the battle with a vim, and fought to good effect.

The drum corps got in some good work also, and the spirited music it made did much to encourage not only the Liberty Boys, but the entire patriot army.

The battle did not last long, for the British got the worst of it, and retreated back down the hill, leaving 229 of their dead and wounded behind.

The patriots lost 140, so the victory was pretty conclusive.

A little later the British sent a force up the hill under the protection of a flag of truce, and they carried away their wounded and buried their dead. The patriots had already attended to their wounded and buried their dead.

The battle of White Plains was ended, and the patriots had come out ahead.

All the soldiers were well pleased, but perhaps none were better pleased than was the case with the Liberty Boys.

They were delighted, and they were pleased, also, with the good work done by the Liberty Boys' Drum Corps.

Soon after the retreat of the British, and after the dead had been buried and the wounded attended to, an orderly came to the Liberty Boys' quarters and told Dick that the commander-in-chief wished to see him at headquarters.

Of course Dick went at once.

When he got there General Washington greeted him cordially.

"Sit down, Dick!" he invited.

The youth did so.

"I have sent for you in order that I might thank you for the good work done by your Liberty Boys, Dick, and also by the drum corps," the general said. "I am greatly pleased, and want that you shall know it."

"Thank you, sir; I am glad that we have done work that is pleasing to you."

"Well, just keep on the way you have been doing, Dick, and everything will be all right."

"We will do so, sir."

They talked awhile longer, and then Dick saluted and went back to the Liberty Boys' quarters.

"What did the commander-in-chief want, Dick?" asked Bob Estabrook.

"He wanted to thank us for the good work we did in the battle, Bob."

"Is that so, really?"

"Yes."

"Hurrah! The commander-in-chief is all right, isn't he?"

"Yes."

"Yah, he is all righd, und dot is so," from Carl.

"Thot's roight," from Patsy; "an' did he spake particularly av me, me bye?"

"I can't say that he did, Patsy."

The Irish youth shook his head.

"Shure, an' Oi would hav' thot he would hav' had some-thin' to say abhout me, begorra; it's mesilf is dhe greatest foighter in dhe pathriot arrumy."

"Yah, I don'd vos t'ink dot," from Carl. "Vat about minesellufs?"

"You are all right, Carl," said Bob. "Patsy isn't any more of a fighter than either of us."

"Dot is der trut'."

The youths quarreled good-naturedly for quite awhile.

"I hope the redcoats will make another attack to-morrow," said Bob, presently.

A number of the youths said about the same thing.

Perhaps the youths who were most pleased because of the commander-in-chief's praise were the members of the drum corps. They were delighted, and made up their minds that they would do good work in every battle they got into.

## CHAPTER X.

### SCATTERING THE COWBOYS AND SKINNERS.

"Good-morning, Dick."

"Good-morning, sir."

"I have sent for you, Dick, because I have some important work for you and your Liberty Boys to do."

"What is the work, sir?"

"I will tell you. I have decided to march to North Castle and establish my army there; but I want to keep watch of the British and learn what they intend doing; so I am going to ask that you remain in this vicinity and do this work."

"Very well, sir."

Three days had elapsed since the battle.

The British remained in camp, but made no move toward making another attack.

General Washington got it into his head that General Howe had sent away for reinforcements, and that when these arrived another attack would be made, and as the position here was not so strong as he would have liked, he had made up his mind to go to North Castle, where the position would be practically unassailable.

He told Dick what he wanted, and the youth told him that he might depend upon him to do the very best he could.

"I know that, Dick," was the reply; "and as soon as the British make a decided move you must let me know."

"I will do so, sir."

That night the patriot army broke camp and marched away toward the north.

All but the Liberty Boys—they remained behind.

They moved from their position on Chatterton Hill, however, and encamped in the timber, a mile away toward the northwest.

Here they felt that they were safe from discovery by



the British, and they would be able to watch the enemy just the same.

When the British learned that the patriot army had evacuated the encampment during the night they were surprised; they were disappointed as well.

General Howe sent scouts to follow the army and see where it was going, and when they returned and reported that the rebels had gone into camp at North Castle, and that the position was unassailable, General Howe held a council, and it was decided that they would not follow the patriots, but would return to the Hudson river, in the hope that General Washington might be enticed away from North Castle.

Leaving the Liberty Boys in camp, Dick followed the British, and he kept after them until they paused and went into camp near Dobbs Ferry.

Then he rode back to the Liberty Boys' encampment, told them to remain where they were, after which he hastened on to North Castle.

General Washington was glad to see him.

"I know you have news for me, or you would not be here," he said.

"You are right, sir," replied Dick; "I have news for you. The British have retired to the Hudson river, and have gone into camp near Dobbs Ferry."

"So that is what they have done, eh?"

"Yes."

The commander-in-chief was thoughtful for a few minutes, and then he asked Dick a number of questions.

The youth answered them promptly and clearly.

When he had finished asking questions General Washington called his orderly and told him to summon the officers of the staff.

This was done, and when the commander-in-chief laid the matter before the officers they entered into a discussion regarding what should be done.

It was decided, finally, to send 5,000 troops over into New Jersey to a point not far from Hackensack. It was decided, also, to send 3,000 troops up to Peekskill, to guard the entrance to the Highlands. General Lee, with 7,000 troops, was to remain at North Castle and be ready to co-operate with the other forces at an hour's notice.

General Washington decided to accompany the force that was to go over into New Jersey; but on further consideration made up his mind to go, first, up the river and reconnoiter a sight for the proposed fortress at West Point.

The commander-in-chief told Dick that he could take the Liberty Boys and act independently for awhile, as there was work that could be done by a small party.

This suited Dick exactly, and he knew that it would please the Liberty Boys as well.

He thanked General Washington, and later on he took his departure.

Two hours later he arrived at the Liberty Boys' encampment.

When he told them that they were to act independently

for awhile, and that they were to come and go as they pleased, the youths were delighted.

"That suits me," said Bob Estabrook; "for then we can go where and when we please, and hunt up as much trouble as we care to."

"Well, I am not eager to hunt trouble," said Dick; "but there are numerous bands of cowboys and skinners in this part of the country, and they are particularly busy just now, robbing Tories and patriots alike, and we can make some of these bands quit business."

"Yah, dot is so," from Carl Gookenspieler.

"Shure, an' thot wull be good wurruk, Dick, me bye," said Patsy Brannigan.

"And after we get through doing that where will we go, Dick?" asked Mark Morrison.

"I don't know; wherever duty calls us."

"And where is that likely to be?"

"Hard telling; perhaps over into New Jersey."

After awhile Dick left the encampment and made his way through the timber, going toward the south.

He had gone perhaps two miles when he came upon a cabin in the depths of the timber.

Smoke was issuing from the chimney, so Dick judged that the cabin was occupied.

The occupants might be friends, and then again they might be foes, and Dick approached the cabin cautiously.

He approached from the rear, and when he reached the cabin he peered through a crack.

To his surprise, there were at least a dozen men in the room.

He noted that they were rough looking men, and, believing that they might be cowboys or skinners, he placed his ear to the crack and listened.

They were talking of robbing the home of a patriot who lived not far away.

Having learned this, Dick hastened back to the Liberty Boys' encampment.

He told them that he had work for a score of them, and a few minutes later twenty of the youths were hastening back through the timber in the direction of the cabin.

When they got there the skinners—for such were the dozen men there—had taken their departure. Dick had heard them mention the name of a patriot whose house they were going to rob, however, and Frank Martin knew where the patriot lived, and guided the youths hither.

The skinners were at work, helping themselves to such stuff as took their fancy.

At a signal from Dick the Liberty Boys rushed forward and leveled their muskets at the scoundrels.

"Surrender!" cried Dick. "Surrender, or die!"

This rather took the skinners by surprise; they stared in paralyzed amazement.

Then of a sudden their leader made a dash around the corner of the cabin. The others followed, and the Liberty Boys, not wishing to let the scoundrels get off free, fired a volley.



Two of the skimmers fell dead, and another was wounded, but not so bad but what he could keep on running.

The patriot settler, a Mr. Morton, was delighted by the turn affairs had taken.

"I am much obliged to you, young men," he said; "but for your coming I should have been robbed of pretty much everything I have that is of any value at all."

"You are more than welcome, sir," said Dick; "we have done only our duty."

"Who are those scoundrels, anyway?" asked Bob Estabrook; "do they live anywhere around here?"

"No; they are hunters and rovers," said Mr. Morton; "they have no settled home, but move around. They make their living now by robbing the settlers."

"Well, I'm not sorry that we killed a couple of them, then," said Dick.

Mr. Morton brought a spade, and a grave was dug, and the two dead skimmers were placed in it and covered over.

Mr. Morton knew Frank Martin, and the two talked together a few minutes, after which the Liberty Boys took their departure.

When they reached the encampment the other youths wanted to hear the news.

The twenty who had had the pleasure of putting the skimmers to flight told the rest about it.

Next day the Liberty Boys had moved their encampment down to the neighborhood of Frank Martin's home. It was also near the home of Mary Dennison.

Frank was given permission to go home and see his mother, and also go to the Dennison home and see Mary.

"I know how it is myself, Frank," said Dick; "make the most of your present opportunities, for we may go over into New Jersey before long, and then you won't have a chance to see your mother or sweetheart."

"Mary isn't my sweetheart, Dick," said Frank.

The Liberty Boy commander smiled.

"Yes, she is, but you don't know it," he said; "you will awaken to a realization of the fact one of these days."

"Perhaps so; you may be right, Dick," with a thoughtful air; "but we have been together all our lives, and it seems to me as though we feel toward each other just like brother and sister."

"I think that you will find that you are more than that, Frank."

Like a dutiful son, Frank went home and saw his mother first, and then he went over to the Dennison home and saw Mary and her mother.

He had not been away from Mary very long, but it was long enough so that when he saw her he made up his mind that she was the prettiest, sweetest girl he ever saw.

He remembered what Dick had said, too, and made up his mind that there was a possibility that there was truth in the Liberty Boy's statement to the effect that he (Frank) loved Mary and did not know it.

He made up his mind that he would tell her that he loved her before he left that part of the country.

"I'm not going to let any of the other boys around here get ahead of me," he told himself.

He kept his word to himself so well that he told Mary before he went away that time, and he was delighted when the girl told him that she loved him and would be his wife when he got through soldiering.

They talked quite awhile, and then Frank gave his sweetheart a hug and some kisses and went back to the encampment.

"How is your mother, Frank?" asked Dick.

"She is well, Dick."

"And how is Mary?" with a smile.

"She is well."

"And happy?"

Frank smiled, and then said:

"Yes, I think she is; she seemed to be, at any rate."

Dick eyed the youth keenly.

"I believe you told her something, old fellow," he said.

Frank blushed and looked slightly confused. Then he nodded and said:

"You are right; I did tell her something, Dick."

The other Liberty Boys had some knowledge of the state of affairs, and began joking Frank and asking him if he intended inviting them to the wedding.

He took their chaffing good-naturedly, and said that they should all have invitations.

"Und ven vill dose veddings dake blace?" asked Carl Gookenspieler.

"Not until after the war ends," said Frank. "I am into this thing to the finish."

"That's the way to talk," said Bob Estabrook. "Work before pleasure every time, Frank, my boy."

The youths put in a week moving about, this way and that, and in that time they scattered four bands of cowboys and skimmers to the four winds.

"We have done very well," said Dick.

"Yes," agreed Bob, "but we might have done better."

"You are never satisfied, old man," with a smile; "you are always wanting to have more than comes to you naturally."

"I guess I am, Dick."

"Yes, there is no doubt regarding that."

"Bhob is loike mesilf, he niver ghets enough foightin', begorra," said Patsy.

"Say, Dick, it seems as though we members of the drum corps are not getting a fair chance to show what we can do," said Tom Wentworth.

"I've been thinking of that, Tom; and I guess that we will make a move of some kind soon that will give you a chance to do something."

## CHAPTER XI.

### IN NEW JERSEY.

"Get ready to break camp, boys."

"Are we going to leave here, Dick?"



"Yes, and right away."

"Good! Where are we going?"

"We will go down south, toward Fort Washington."

"Do you think the British are going to attack the fort, Dick?"

"It wouldn't surprise me, Bob."

"Jove, I hope that if they do we will get there in time to take a hand in the battle."

It was early morning, and the Liberty Boys had just finished eating their breakfast.

When they learned that they were to break camp and go down toward Fort Washington they were well pleased, for there did not seem to be much for them to do in this part of the country.

They began to break camp right away, for they were eager to get away.

This did not take them very long, for there was not much to do.

When they were ready they mounted their horses and rode away toward the south.

They made very good time, for they were not afraid of encountering any redcoats this far north.

When they got down to within two miles of Fort Washington, however, they slackened the speed of their horses.

They proceeded cautiously now, for there was danger of running upon some redcoats at almost any moment.

When they were about a mile from the fort they were surprised by hearing the sound of musketry, mingled with which was the deeper booming of cannon.

"Jove, Dick, I believe the British have attacked the fort already!" exclaimed Bob.

"It would seem so, Bob."

"Well, let's hurry up and get into the affair, Dick!"

"Very well; but we had better leave our horses here, had we not?"

"I judge so."

The order was given to dismount and tie their horses, and the youths hastened to obey.

"Now forward," ordered Dick; "members of the drum corps, are you ready?"

"Yes, Dick," was the reply.

The youths marched away at a double-quick.

They did not fear encountering any redcoats until they got near the fort, for the enemy would be busy there.

Presently they came in sight of the fort.

Sure enough, a battle was in progress.

"Forward, Liberty Boys!" cried Dick.

The youths were perfectly willing to obey the order.

They dashed up the slope toward the fort.

As they were approaching from the rear the redcoats did not notice them, so the youths were enabled to get quite close, close enough, indeed, so that they could fire a volley with considerable effect.

"Fire!" cried Dick.

The youths obeyed instantly.

Crash! Roar!

The volley rang out loudly.

This came as a surprise to the redcoats. They had not expected an attack from the rear.

At this moment the drum corps began.

It was the first opportunity the members of the drum corps had had to do any work for quite awhile, and they made the most of it.

They pounded the drums for all they were worth. They made lots of noise.

There was very good harmony in their drumming, also.

The music had an enthusing effect upon the Liberty Boys.

The Liberty Boys fired two volleys from their pistols.

They were close to the enemy, and the volleys were quite effective.

A number of the redcoats fell dead and wounded.

This was doing good work, but Dick wished to do even better.

He knew his Liberty Boys would be glad to do anything he ordered them to, no matter how desperate it might seem, and so now he ordered them to charge.

Forward dashed the Liberty Boys straight at the redcoats.

Dick Slater was in the lead, and he seemed to be utterly fearless and bear a charmed life.

The drum corps was close at hand, and the music of the drums seemed to inspire the youths to deeds of recklessness and daring.

Over all waved the starry flag.

They tore the ranks of the British—who had faced about to meet the youths—to pieces, and caused great demoralization in the ranks of the enemy.

It soon became patent to Dick, however, that they would have to retreat or be captured; so he gave the command, and the Liberty Boys retreated back down the slope.

It was fortunate for them that they had ripped the ranks of the redcoats up to such an extent as they had, for they were thus enabled to get away before a volley could be fired at them.

When they were at a safe distance they paused.

"Why didn't you let us keep on fighting, Dick?" asked Bob, in a disappointed voice.

"Because I saw it would be folly," was the reply. "Had we remained there we would have been captured."

"Then you think the British are going to capture the fort?"

"I am sure of it."

"Jove, that will be bad!"

"Yes, so it will; but it can't be helped."

"I suppose not."

"No; the British outnumber the garrison five to one, and the result is inevitable."

"Well, we did some good work, anyway."

"So we did."

"And the drum corps did some good work, too," said Mark Morrison.

"That's right; so it did," from Sam Sanderson.

"I am glad that you think so," said Tom Wentworth.



"Well, we couldn't get along without the drum corps now," said Bob Estabrook.

"No, indeed," said Mark.

"What are we to do now?" asked Bob Estabrook.

"That is the question," said Dick.

They then took account of the number of men that they had lost, and it was found that three Liberty Boys had been killed and five wounded, though none of these were wounded severely.

The wounds were attended to, and then the youths moved back a little farther.

"There can be no doubt regarding the matter. The British are going to capture the fort," said Dick; "and it would be suicidal for us to venture up there again."

"They would capture us if we did," said Mark Morrison.

"Quite likely, Mark."

"Then the best thing we can do is to go back to where we left our horses," said Sam Sanderson.

"I think we may as well do so," said Dick.

"Let's wait here until the battle ends," said Bob.

"All right."

They did so; and they did not have long to wait, either. The battle was over in less than half an hour.

The British had captured the entire garrison.

This ended the matter, so far as the youths were concerned.

They knew there was now no reason why they should remain longer in the vicinity.

So they set out and made their way back to where they had left their horses.

Here they paused again, and talked the situation over.

Where should they go, and what should they do?

These were the questions.

After they had talked the matter over for awhile Dick said:

"I judge that the best thing for us to do is to go over into New Jersey and join the army near Hackensack."

"That's the thing to do, Dick," from Bob.

The order was given to mount, and the youths obeyed.

Then they rode northward several miles, after which they turned toward the west.

"Where are we headed for now, Dick?" asked Bob.

"Dobbs Ferry."

"That's so; there is a ferry there, isn't there?"

"Yes."

The youths reached the river at last, and the ferryman began the work of taking them across.

It required a number of trips, but they were all across at last.

Then they set out in a southerly direction.

By riding hard they managed to reach the patriot encampment before dark.

They were given a welcome by the soldiers.

When the soldiers learned that the youths had taken part in the battle of Fort Washington they inquired eagerly about it.

The Liberty Boys told all they knew, and their story was listened to with interest.

While they were talking a messenger came to the encampment and went to Dick Slater and told him that the commander-in-chief wished to see him at Fort Lee right away.

The two set out at once.

An hour later they arrived at Fort Lee.

Dick went straight to the house occupied by the commander-in-chief as headquarters.

He found Washington there, in company with General Greene.

They both greeted Dick cordially.

"I hear that you and your Liberty Boys were engaged in the battle over at Fort Washington, Dick," said General Washington.

"So we were, sir."

"Tell me all about it, my boy."

The youth did so.

He told the story of the battle as he had observed it.

The two generals listened with interest and the closest attention.

The youth gave them more information than they had as yet been able to secure.

When they had become possessed of all the information it was in Dick's power to give they held a consultation.

"I think that it will be best to evacuate this fort, General Greene," said the commander-in-chief at last. "General Howe will turn his attention in this direction at once, and if your garrison remains here it will be caught like a rat in a trap."

"I am ready to do whatever you wish, your excellency," said General Greene.

"Very well; then I suggest that you give the command for the members of the garrison to get ready to evacuate."

"When shall we leave here—in the morning?"

"Well, it will be best to get ready to leave in the morning, should it become necessary to do so."

"I will have everything in readiness so that we may leave early in the morning if we wish to do so," was the reply.

Then the commander-in-chief turned to Dick.

"You may do some scouting and spying to-night, my boy, if you like," he said. "I think the enemy will cross the river before morning."

"I shall be glad to do so, your excellency," said Dick.

A little later he took his leave and went back to the patriot encampment.

He then made such arrangements as he wished, after which he left the encampment and made his way over toward the river.

He watched that night, but did not see anything of the British.

He went to Fort Lee and reported to the commander-in-chief, who told him that he had done well, and that a spy would be sent to watch during the daytime.

"Then you can watch to-night again," he said.



"Very well, sir; I will go to the encampment and get some sleep."

The Liberty Boys slept part of the day, and that evening went back to Fort Lee, reported to the commander-in-chief, and then went away on another spying expedition.

"Watch closely, Dick," were the last words spoken to the youth by the commander-in-chief; "I am of the opinion that the British will cross the river to-night, and if they do we wish to have early information of the fact."

"I will watch closely, sir," was Dick's reply; "and if the British cross the river I will come and inform you of the fact promptly."

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE RETREAT THROUGH NEW JERSEY.

"There they come!"

It was past midnight on the night of the 19th of November.

The Liberty Boy was ensconced on a bluff overlooking the Hudson river.

It was a lovely moonlight night, and it was possible to see almost as plainly as would have been the case in the daytime.

The youth had been watching closely, and at last had been rewarded by seeing three or four boats push off from the east shore.

The boats were good-sized ones, and were filled with men.

That the men were British soldiers, Dick did not have any doubt; but he wished to be sure, and he stole down to the shore at a point close to where he thought it likely the boats would land, and waited.

When the boats reached the shore and the men disembarked Dick saw that they were indeed British soldiers.

This was all he needed to know.

It was his business to get back to the fort with the information.

He set out at once, and two hours later was at his destination.

He told the orderly that he wished to see General Washington, and the orderly said he would awaken the commander-in-chief and tell him that Dick was there.

The orderly returned presently, and told Dick that the commander-in-chief would see him in a few minutes.

A little while afterward General Washington appeared, and he greeted Dick cordially.

"You have news, I suppose?" he said.

"Yes, sir; the British are crossing the river."

"So I judged. How far up the stream is it to where they are making the crossing?"

"About five miles."

"Then they will be here soon after daybreak?"

"It is more than likely that they will."

"I am glad that you brought me the information in time. The garrison must be aroused and the evacuation made at once."

It was now past three o'clock in the morning.

When they were ready they marched away from the fort and headed in the direction of the main patriot encampment near Hackensack.

The British had made a quick crossing, and were on hand soon after daybreak.

They had gone to Fort Lee, had found it evacuated, and had promptly come in pursuit of the fleeing garrison.

They came on so quickly that it became necessary to give them battle.

This just suited the Liberty Boys, and they took up their position at the rear of the patriot army, where the attack would be made by the British.

The drum corps got ready for business also.

Presently the British came in sight.

On they came, closer and closer.

The Liberty Boys got ready to receive them.

So did the other soldiers, so far as that was concerned, but as the Liberty Boys were nearer to the British they would get the first chance at them.

Soon the British were within musket-shot distance.

"Ready, boys!" said Dick; "take good aim, and when I give the word, fire."

The youths leveled their muskets and took careful aim.

Dick waited until he was sure that he had taken good aim, and then he gave the command:

"Fire!"

The Liberty Boys obeyed instantly.

Crash! Roar!

The volley rang out loudly.

A number of the British fell dead and wounded.

Then the Liberty Boys proceeded to reload their muskets, while the soldiers back of them fired a volley.

They dropped a number of the redcoats dead and wounded.

But it did not stop the enemy. The British were in such numbers that they felt they could advance and overwhelm the patriots, and they were eager to do this.

But the patriot soldiers had broken camp hastily, and were moving away as rapidly as possible.

Those at the rear retreated and fought the British as they went.

The Liberty Boys remained at the extreme rear of the army, and kept up as rapid a fire on the British as they could. They did more to disconcert the enemy than all the other soldiers together.

This was the beginning of the great retreat through New Jersey, a retreat that has become famous, because of the suffering to which the patriot soldiers were exposed.

It was now cold weather, and the ground was frozen. Many of the soldiers had scarcely half enough clothing, and a great number were but little more than half shod; indeed, they were almost barefooted.

This made it terribly hard on them, and it has been



stated that it would have been possible to track the army by the bloodstains on the ground, from the bleeding feet of the soldiers.

All day long the retreat and pursuit went on, and at night the patriots went into camp on a knoll, from where they would be able to make a good fight in case they were attacked in the nighttime.

They were not attacked that night, and the next day the chase went on as before.

This was kept up day after day, till the patriot army got across the Raritan River.

Here the army stopped, and the bridge across the river was destroyed.

"That will delay the British a day or two," said General Washington, "and it will give our men a chance to rest up."

"And it will give us a chance to get some provisions," said General Greene.

"So it will."

This was just the work the Liberty Boys delighted in, and they at once set out to secure some provisions.

They made their way along until they came to the home of a man who seemed to be well-to-do, for he had a good-sized house, a large barn and a number of outhouses, such as smokehouse, granary, etc.

Here they helped themselves to a lot of provisions of various kinds.

When they had secured all they could well carry away, they rode back to the encampment and turned the provisions over to the commissary department to be apportioned out.

The patriots remained here one day, resting; then they set out again and made their way southeastward toward the Delaware River.

The British got across the Raritan as soon as they could, and came on in pursuit, but they failed to catch the patriots, who secured all the boats for ten miles up and down the river, and crossed over to the Pennsylvania side.

When the British got to the river they found that there were no boats to be had, and they were forced to go to camp.

A portion of their force took possession of Trenton, while the other portion went down to Burlington, about seven miles distant.

All this time the Liberty Boys had been doing good work. They were mounted, and so were enabled to scour the country around for provisions for the troops.

And now that they had gone into what seemed likely to be winter quarters, they went at this work as a steady thing.

One afternoon General Washington sent for Dick and told him that he would like to learn what the enemy was doing and what they intended doing, if possible.

The youth said he would make the attempt to find out what the commander-in-chief wanted to know.

He went to the river as soon as it was dark, and getting into a boat, he rowed across to the east shore.

Here he disembarked, tied the painter to a bush, and then he made his way down to Trenton.

He managed to enter the city, for the sentinels were careless and did not keep a sharp lookout. They did not think

it necessary, for they knew the broad waters of the Delaware was rolling between them and the enemy.

The Liberty Boy spent that night and the next day in Trenton, and then on the following night he slipped out and away again.

He found his boat where he had left it—he had been careful to leave it well hidden—and getting in he rowed across the river.

An hour later he was in the encampment making his report to General Washington.

The news he gave the great man resulted in the crossing of the Delaware on Christmas night by General Washington and 2,500 troops, and the capture of Trenton and 1,000 troops, mostly Hessians.

The Liberty Boys' Drum Corps did good work on this occasion, in spite of the fact that it was a cold, blustery morning, with the snow flying.

In fact the drum corps did good work all through the war.

It helped enthuse the Liberty Boys and urge them on in battle, and it helped the other soldiers as well—those who were not members of the Liberty Boys' company.

George Welburn, the ex-marine who had deserted from the British warship and joined the Liberty Boys' company, remained with the youths throughout the war, and when it ended he became an American citizen by adoption, and spent the rest of his life in this country, marrying and living happily.

Frank Martin was married to Mary Dennison as soon as the war was ended.

Dick Slater met Victor Le Salle again at a later period, and learned that the Frenchman was indeed a secret representative of the French government, and that he was doing all he could to get the French government to espouse the patriot cause.

This was done later on, with good results, for the French soldiers did good work at Yorktown, where Cornwallis was forced to surrender, this virtually ending the war.

The Liberty Boys and their drum corps were in evidence at Yorktown also. They did splendid work there, as they had done everywhere else.

## THE END.

The next number (179) of "The Liberty Boys of '76" will contain "THE LIBERTY BOYS AND THE GUN-MAKER; or, THE BATTLE OF STONY POINT," by Harry Moore.

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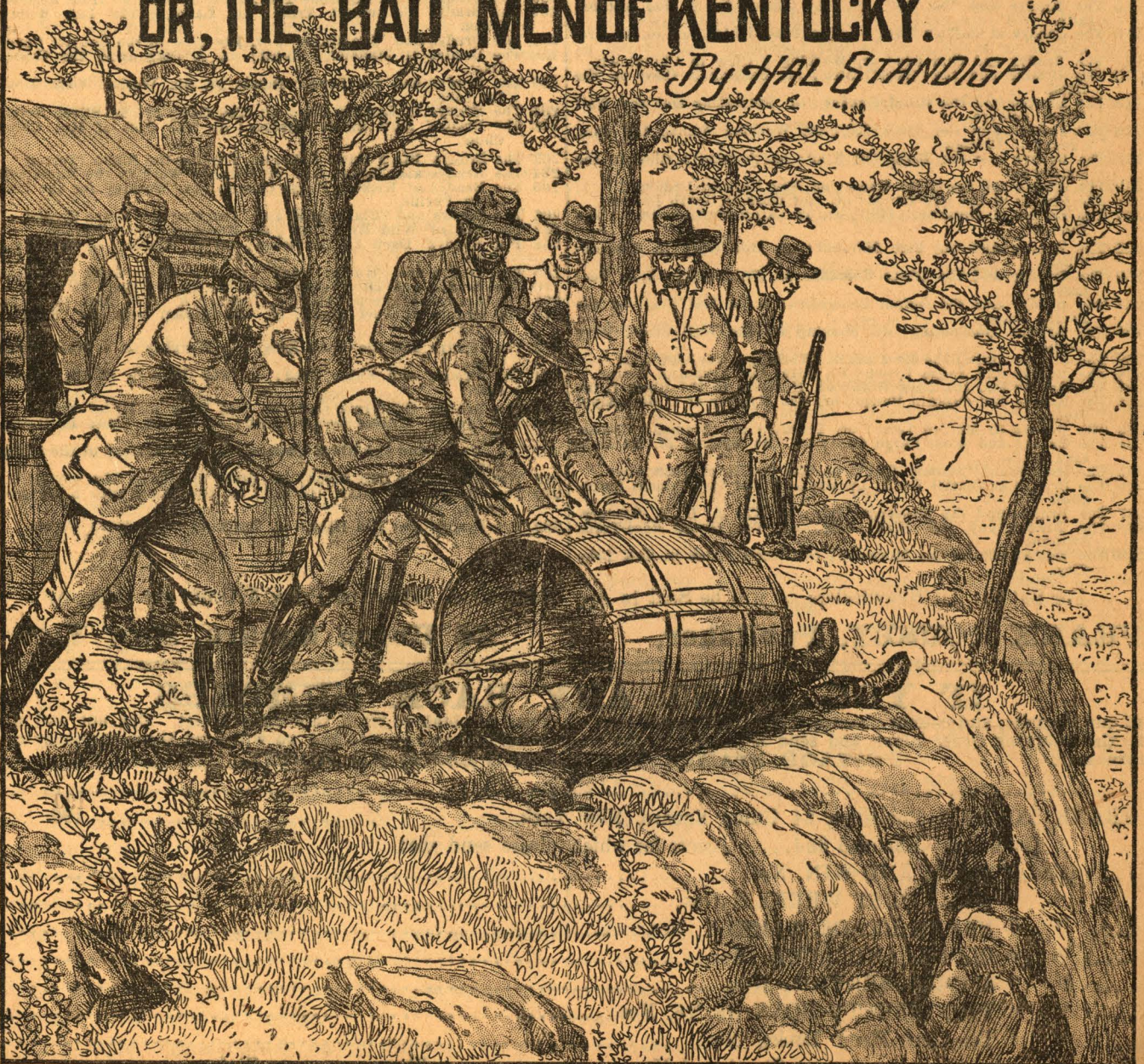
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